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ARGO between SCYLLA and CHARYBDIS

THE TALE OF THE ARGONAUTS

by APOLLONIUS OF RHODES

TRANSLATED by ARTHUR S. WAY

MDCCCCI · PUBLISHED · BY · J · M · DENT
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The Tale of the Argonauts

THE FIRST BOOK

First in my song shalt thou be, O Phœbus, the song that I sing
Of the heroes of old, who sped, at the hest of Pelias the king,
When down through the gorge of the Pontus-sea, through the Crags Dark-blue,
On the Quest of the Fleece of Gold the strong-ribbed Argo flew.
For an oracle came unto Pelias, how that in days to be
A terrible doom should be dealt him of him whom his eyes should see
From the field coming in, with the one foot only sandal-shod.
Nor long thereafter did Jason fulfil the word of the God:
For in wading the rush of Amaurus swollen with winter-tide rain
One sandal plucked he forth of the mire, but the one was he fain 10
To leave in the depths, for the swirl of the waters to sweep to the main.
Straightway to the presence of Pelias he came, and his hap was to light
On a banquet, the which unto Father Poseidon the king had dight,
And the rest of the Gods, but Pelasgian Hêrê he heeded not.
And the king beheld him, and straightway laid for his life the plot,
And devised for him toil of a troublous voyage, that lost in the sea,
Or lost amid alien men his home-return might be.
Of the ship and her fashioning, bards of the olden time have told

How Argus wrought, how Athênê made him cunning-souled.
But now be it mine the lineage and names of her heroes to say,
And to tell of the long sea-paths whereover they needs must stray
And the deeds that they wrought:—may the Muses vouchsafe
to inspire the lay.

Of Orpheus first will I sing, of the child that Calliopê bare,
As telleth the tale, for she loved Oeagrus, Thracia's heir.
By the peak Pimplean was born the Song-queen's wondrous child
For they tell how he charmed by the voice of his song on the
mountains wild
The stubborn rocks into life, made rivers their flowing refrain,
And the wildwood oaks this day be memorials of that weird strain;
For they burgeon and bloom by Zonê yet on the Thracian shore,
Ranked orderly line upon line, the selfsame trees which of yore,
Spell-drawn by his lyre, from Pieria followed the minstrel on.
Such an one was the Orpheus that Aison's son for a helper won
For his high emprise, when he followed the pointing of Cheiron's
hand,—
Orpheus, who ruled o'er the Bistonid folk in Pieria-land.

And swiftly Asterion came, whom Komêtês begat by the side
Of Apidanus, there where his seaward-swirling waters glide;
In Peiresiae he dwelt, anigh to Phyllêion's leafy crest.
Mighty Apidanus, sacred Enipeus, have thitherward pressed
To mingle the waters, far-severed that rise from the earth's deep
breast.

Polyphemus forsook Larissa, and unto Jason he sought;
Eilatus' son: in his youth mid the Lapithan heroes he fought.
When the Lapithans armed them for fight, when the Centaur
host they quelled,
Their youngest he was; but now were his limbs sore burdened
with eld.
Yet even as of old his heart with the spirit of battle swelled.

Nor in Phylakê Iphiklus tarried to waste an inglorious life,
Uncle of Aison's child, for that Aison had taken to wife
His sister the Phylakid maiden Alkimêdê: wherefore strong
Was the love of his kin to constrain him to join that hero-throng.

Neither Admêtus in Pherae, the goodly land of sheep,
In his palace would tarry beneath Chalkodon's mountain-steep. 50
Neither in Alopê tarried Echion and Erytus, sons
Of Hermes, wealthy in corn-land, crafty-hearted ones.
And their kinsman, the third with these, came forth, on the Quest as they hied,
Aithalides: where the streams of Amphrysus softly slide,
Him Eupolemeia the Phthian, Myrmidon's daughter, bare,
But offspring of Antianeira the Menetid those twain were.
Came thither Korônus, forsaking Gyrton the wealthy town:
Right valiant was Kaineus' son, yet he passed not his father's renown.
For of Kaineus the poets have sung, how smitten of Centaurs he died,
Who could not be slain, when alone in his prowess, with none 60 beside,
He drave them before him in rout, but they rallied, and charged afresh,
Yet availed not their fury to thrust him aback, nor to pierce his flesh;
But unconquered, unflinching, down to the underworld he passed,
Battered from life by the storm of the massy pines that they cast.
And came Titaresian Mopsus withal, unto whom was given
Of Lêto's son above all men the lore of the birds of the heaven.
And there was Eurydamas, Ktimenus' son, which dwelt in the land
Of Dolopian folk: by the Xynian mere did his palace stand.
And from Opus Menoitius fared at Aktor his father's behest
To the end he might go with the chieftains of men on the 70 glorious Quest.
And Eurytion hath followed with these; Eribôtes the mighty is gone,
This, Teleon's scion, and that, of Irus, Aktor's son;
For in sooth it was Teleon begat Eribôtes the glory-crowned,
And Irus, Eurytion. With these was a third, O'ileus, found,
Peerless in manhood, exceeding cunning to follow the flight
Of the foe, when the reeling battalions were shattered before his might.

Came the son of Kanêthus the scion of Abas; with eager speed
Came Kanthus forth of Eubœa: it was not fate-decreed
That again he should turn and behold Kerinthus, for doomed was he,
Even he and Mopsus withal, the wise in augury, 80
To perish in Libya, lost in the waste of a wide sand-sea.
Sooth, never was mischief removed too far to be found of the doomed;
Forasmuch as in Libya's desert were even these entombed,
As far from the Kolchian land as the space outstretched between
The sun's uprising, and where the setting thereof is seen.
And Klytius and Iphitus gathered to that great mustering,
Oichalia's warders, children of Eurytus, ruthless king,
Who received of Far-smiter a bow; but he had no profit thereof,
For in archery-skill with the giver's self he wantonly strove.
And with these fared Aiakus' sons, yet not from the selfsame 90 place,
Nor together, for far had they wandered away from the home of their race,
Aegina, what time in their folly the blood of their brother they spilt,
Even Phokus: to Salamis Telamon bare his burden of guilt:
But Peleus roved till in Phthia the halls of the outcast he built.
And with these from Kekropia Boutes, a lord of battle-fame,
Stout Teleon's son, and Phalêrus the mighty spearman came.
It was Alkon his father that sent him forth: no sons save him
Had the ancient to cherish his age and his light of life grown dim:
Yet, albeit his only-begotten he was, and the last of his line,
He sent him, that so amidst valour of heroes his prowess should 100 shine.
But Theseus, of all the sons of Erechtheus most renowned,
At Tainarum under the earth by an unseen fetter was bound.
For he trod the Path of Fear with Peirithoüs; else that Quest
By the might of these had been lightlier compassed of all the rest.
And Tiphys, Hagnias' son, hath forsaken the Thespians that dwell
In the city of Siphas: of all men keenest was he to foretell

The wrath of the waves on the broad sea, keen to foreknow from afar
The blasts of the storm, and to guide the galley by sun and by star.
'Twas Athênê Tritonis herself that made him eager-souled
To join that muster of heroes that longed his face to behold; 110
For she fashioned the sea-swift ship, and Argus but wrought as she planned,
Arestor's son, for the Goddess's counsels guided his hand:
Therefore amongst all ships unmatched was the ship that he made,
Even all that with swinging oars the paths of the sea have essayed.
Came Phlias withal from Araithyriae to essay the Quest,
From a wealthy home, for the toil of his hands had the Wine-god blessed,
His father, where welleth Asôpus up from the green hill's breast.
From Argos did sons of Bias, Arêius and Talaus, come,
And mighty Laodokus, fruit of Nêleus' daughter's womb,
Even Pero, for whose sake Aiolus' scion Melampus bore 120
In Iphiklus' steading affliction of bonds exceeding sore.
Nor yet did the prowess of mighty-hearted Herakles fail
The longing of Aison's son for his helping, as telleth the tale.
But as soon as the flying rumour of gathering heroes he heard,
He turned from the track that he trod from Arcadia Argos-ward,
On the path that he paced as he bare that boar alive from the glen
Of Lampeia, wherein he had battened, the vast Erymanthian fen.
At the entering-in of Mycenae's market-stead he cast
From his mighty shoulders the beast, as he writhed in his bonds knit fast:
But himself of his own will, thrusting Eurystheus' purpose aside, 130
Hasted away; and Hylas, his henchman true and tried,
Which bare his arrows and warded his bow, with the hero hath hied.
Therewithal hath the scion of god-descended Danaus gone,
Nauplius, born unto King Klytonêus, Naubolus' son;
And of Lernus Naubolus sprang; and Lernus, as bards have told,
Of Proitus, Nauplius' son; and unto Poseidon of old
Amymônê, Danaus' daughter, who couched in the God's embrace,
Bare Nauplius, chief in the seafaret's craft of the Earth-born race.

Last cometh Idmon the seer, of all that in Argos dwell,
Cometh knowing the doom he hath heard the birds of heaven forete
Lest the people should haply begrudge him a hero's glorious fam
Yet not of the very loins of Abas the doomed seer came;
But the son of Lêto begat him to share the noble name
Of Aetolia's sons, and in prophecy-lore he made him wise,
And in signs of the fowl of the heaven and tokens 'mid flame that ris
Polydeukes the strong did Aetolia's Princess Leda speed
From Sparta, and Kastor cunning to rein the fleetfoot steed.
These twain in Tyndareus' palace, her dearly-beloved, her prid
That lady at one birth bare; howbeit she nowise denied
Their prayer to depart, for her spirit was worthy of Zeus' bride
Apharetus' children, Lynkeus and Idas the arrogant-souled,
From Arênê went forth: in their prowess exceeding were thes
overbold,
Even both; but Lynkeus for eyes of keenest ken was renowned
If in sooth that story be true, that, though one lay underground
Yet lightly of Lynkeus' eyes should the gloom-swathed corps
be found.
And with these Periklymenus Neleus' son was enkindled to fare
Eldest of all the sons that the Lady of Pylos bare
Unto Neleus the godlike; and might unmeasured Poseidon gav
To the prince, and a boon moreover, that whatso shape h
should crave,
That, as he fought in the shock of the meeting ranks, he should have
From Arcadia Amphidamas and Kepheus came for the Quest
Who were dwellers in Tegea-town, and the land that Apheida
possessed,
Two scions of Aleus; yea and a third followed even as they went
Ankaius: Lykurgus his father was minded the lad to have sent
Being elder brother to these, but himself was constrained to sta
In the city with Aleus, tending the dear head silver-grey.
Howbeit in charge to his brethren twain he gave the lad.
So he went, and the fell of a bear Maenalian for buckler he had
And a battle-axe huge his right hand swung; for his armou
of fight

Had his old grandsire in a secret chamber hidden from sight, 170
If haply so he might cripple the wings of the eagle's flight.
Fared thither Augeias; they named him in songs of the olden day
The Sun-god's child, and the hero in Elis-land bare sway
In pride of his wealth: but he longed to behold the Kolchian coast,
And to look upon mighty Aiêtes the lord of the Kolchian host.
Asterius came, and Amphion, the sons that a fair queen bore,
When Pellênê's king Hyperasius dwelt in the city of yore
By Pelles their grandsire built 'neath the cliffs of Achaia's shore.
Euphêmus from Taïnarus came to be joined to their company,
Europê's child; and the swiftest of all men on Earth was he: 180
For the daughter of Tityos the giant couched in Poseidon's embrace;
And this their son would run o'er the grey sea's weltering face,
Neither sank in the surge his fast-flying steps, but, with footsole alone
Bedewed with the spray, on his watery path was he wafted on.
Sons of Poseidon beside him withal two other came,
One leaving Miletus afar, the city of haughty fame,
Even Erginus, and one from Imbrasian Hêrê's fane
Parthenia, Ankaius the mighty; and men of renown were the twain
In the craft of the sea, and withal in the toil of the battle-strain.
Hasting from Kalydon Oineus' son to their muster hath hied, 190
Meleager the stalwart; and there was Laocoön still at his side,
Brother to Oineus; but not of the selfsame womb were they,
For a handmaid bare him; and him, though flecked was his hair with grey,
For guide and for guard to his son hath Oineus the old king sent.
So it fell that a beardless lad to the valorous gathering went
Of heroes; yet no man of all that came had the deeds outdone
Of the lad, save Herakles, if that he might but have tarried on
One year mid Aetolia's sons, till he grew to his strength, I ween.
Yea, and his mother's brother, a javelin-hurler keen,
And a warrior tried, when foot is set against foot in the fray, 200
Iphiklus, Thestius' scion, trod the selfsame way.
Came Palaimonius, whose grandsire was Olenius, and his sire

Lernus in name; but in birth was he child of the Lord of Fire:
Wherefore he halted in either foot; but his bodily frame
And his prowess might no man contemn, for which cause also his name
Was found with the mighty who won for Jason deathless fame.
Came Iphitus, Ornytus' son, from Phokis withal for the Quest,
Of Naubolus' line: in the days overpast was Jason his guest,
What time unto Pytho he fared to inquire of the high Gods' doom
Touching the Quest; for he welcomed him then in his mountain home. 210
And Zetes and Kalais withal, the North-wind's children, were there,
Whom Oreithyia, Erechtheus' daughter, to Boreas bare
In the uttermost part of wintry Thrace; for the God swooped down,
And the Thracian North-wind snatched her away from Kekrops' town,
Even as she whirled in the dance on the lawn by Ilissus' flow.
And he brought her afar to the place where standeth the crag men know
For the Rock of Sarpedon, whereby doth Erginus the river glide:
And he shrouded her round with viewless clouds, and he made her his bride.
And lo, on the ankles of these did quivering pinions unfold,
Strong wings, as in air they upleapt, a marvel great to behold, 220
Gleaming with golden scales; and about their shoulders strayed,
Down-streaming from neck and from head in the glory of youth arrayed,
Dark tresses that tossed in the rushing breezes amidst them that played.
Yea, and Akastus, his own son, had no will to abide
That day with his mighty sire in the halls of Pelias' pride.
Nor would Argus be left, who had wrought as Athênê guided his hand;
But these twain needs must be numbered too with the glorious band.
This is the tale of the helpers with Aison's son that were found:
These be the men whom the folk, even all which dwelt around,

Called ever the Minyan Chiefs: for of those that went on the Quest 230
Born of the daughters of Minyas' blood were the most and the best.
Yea, she which had borne this Jason to emprise perilous-wild,
Alkimedê, also was daughter of Klymenê, Minyas' child.
Now when all things ready were made by the hands of many a thrall,
Even whatso the galley for sea ready-dight should be furnished withal,
When traffic lureth the shipmen afar to an alien land,
Then through the city they passed to their ship, where she lay on the strand
Which is called Magnesian Pagasae. Ever, as onward they strode,
To right and to left a mingled multitude ran: but they showed
Radiant amidst them as stars amid clouds; and some 'gan cry, 240
As they gazed on the glorious forms that in harness of war swept by:
'What is in Pelias' thoughts, King Zeus, that so goodly a band
Of heroes is hurled by him forth of the Panachaian land?
In the day of their coming with ravening fire the halls shall they fill
Of Aiêtes, except he shall yield them the Fleece of his own good will.
But a long way lieth between, unaccomplished yet is the toil.'
So spake they on this side and that through the city: the women the while,
Heavenward uplifting their hands, to the Gods that abide for aye
Made vehement prayer for the heart's delight of the home-coming day.
And one to another made answer, and moaned, as her tears fell fast: 250
'Hapless Alkimedê, thee too evil hath found at the last;
Nor to thee was vouchsafed amid bliss to the end of thy days to attain!
Woe's me for Aison the ill-starred!—verily this had been gain
For him, if rolled in his shroud before this woeful day,
Deep under Earth, with the cup of affliction untasted, he lay:
And O that the darkling surge, when Hellê the maiden died,

Had whelmed down Phrixus too with the ram!—but a man's voice cried
From the throat of the monster, the portent accurst, that so it might doom
For Alkimedê sorrow and griefs untold in the days to come.'
So 'mid the moan of the women marched the heroes along. 260
And by this were the thralls and the handmaids gathered in one great throng.
Then fell on his neck his mother, and sharply the anguish-thorn
Pierced each soft breast, the while his father, the eld-forlorn,
Close-swathed as a corpse on his bed, lay groaning and groaning again.
But the hero essayed to hush their laments and assuage their pain
With words of cheer, and he spake, 'Take up my war-array,'
To the thralls, and with downcast eyes did these in silence obey.
But his mother, as round her child her arms at the first she had flung,
So clave she, and wept without stint: as the motherless maiden she clung,
Whose forlorn little arms clasp fondly her grey old nurse, when 270 the tide
Cometh up of her woe:—she hath no one to love her nor comfort beside;
And a weary lot is hers 'neath a stepdame's tyrannous sway,
Who with bitter revilings evil-entreateth her youth alway:
And her heart as she waileth is cramped as by chains in her frenzied despair,
That she cannot sob forth the anguish that struggleth for utterance there:
So stintlessly wept Alkimedê, so in her arms did she strain
Her son; and she cried from the depths of her love and her yearning pain:
'Oh, that on that same day when I, the affliction-oppressed,
Hearkened the voice of Pelias the king, and his evil behest,
I had yielded up the ghost, and forgotten to mourn and to weep, 280
That thyself, that thine own dear hands, in the grave might have laid me to sleep,

O my beloved!—for this was the one wish unfulfilled:
But with other thy nursing-dues long had mine heart in contentment been stilled.
And I, of Achaia's daughters the envied in days that are gone,
Like a bondwoman now in tenantless halls shall be left alone,
Pining, a hapless mother, in yearning for thee, my pride
And exceeding delight in the days overpast, for whom I untied
For the first time and last my zone; for to me beyond others the doom
Of the stern Birth-goddess begrudged abundant fruit of the womb.
Ah me for my blindness of heart!—not once, not in dreams, 290 might I see
The vision of Phrixus' deliverance turned to a curse for me!'
So mourned she, and ever she moaned amidst of her speech, and thereby
Stood her handmaids, and echoed her wail, an exceeding bitter cry.
But the hero with gentle words for her comfort made answer, and spake:
'Fill me not thus overmeasure with anguish of soul for thy sake,
Mother mine, forasmuch as from evil thou shalt not redeem me so
By thy tears, but shalt add the rather woe unto weight of woe.
For the Gods mete out unto mortals afflictions unforeseen:
Wherefore be strong to endure their doom, though thine anguish be keen.
Take comfort to think that Athênê hereunto our courage hath 300 stirred:
Remember the oracles: call to remembrance how good was the word
Of Phœbus: be glad for this hero-array for mine help that is come.
Now, mother, do thou with thine handmaids in quiet abide in thine home,
Neither be as a bird ill-omened to bode my ship ill-speed;
And escort of clansmen and thralls thy son to the galley shall lead.'
So spake he, and turned him, and forth of his halls his way hath he ta'en.
And as goeth Apollo forth of his incense-bearing fane,

Through Delos the hallowed, or Klaros, or Pytho the place
his shrine,
Or Lycia the wide, where the waters of Xanthus ripple and shine.
So seemed he, as onward he pressed through the throng, and
loud acclaim
Of their mingled cheering arose. And there met him an ancient
dame,
Iphias, priestess of Artemis warder of tower and wall.
At his right hand caught she, and kissed it, but spake no word at all,
For she could not, how fain soe'er, so pressed the multitude on;
And she drifted away to the fringe of the crowd, and was left alone,
As the old be left by the young: and he passed on afar, and was
gone.
So when he had left the streets of the city builded fair,
To the beach Pagasaean he came, and his comrades hailed him there
In a throng abiding beside the Argo ship as she lay
By the river's mouth, and overagainst her gathered they. 320
And they looked, and behold, Adrastus and Argus hasting amain
Thitherward from the city, and sorely they marvelled, beholding
the twain
Despite the purpose of Pelias thitherward hurrying fast.
On his shoulders a bull's hide Argus the son of Arestor had cast,
Great, dark with the fell; but the prince in a mantle fair was arrayed,
Twofold: Pelopeia his sister the gift in his hand had laid.
Howbeit Jason forbare to ask them of this or of that;
But he bade them for council sit them down where the others sat.
So there upon folded sails, and the mast as it lay along,
Row upon row were the heroes sitting all in a throng; 330
And to these of his heart's good will the son of Aison spake:
'What things soever it needeth that sea-bound galleys should take,
All this ready dight for our going lieth in seemly array.
Wherefore for these things' sake will we make no longer delay
From our sailing, so soon as the breezes but blow for the voyage
begun.
But, friends—since in hope for the home-return to our land we be
one,

And one in the way we must take to Aiêtes, the path of the Quest,
Therefore do ye now choose with hearts ungrudging our best
To be chief and captain, to order all our goings aright,
To take on him our quarrels with aliens, and pledge our covenant-plight.' 340
He spake, and the youths upon valiant Herakles turned their eyes,
As he sat in their midst, and from all the heroes did one shout rise,
Crying 'Our captain be thou!'—but not from his place he stirred;
But he stretched his right hand forth, and he answered and spake the word:
'Let no man offer this honour to me: I will nowise consent;
And if any man else would arise, I will also withstand his intent.
The selfsame man who assembled our band, let him too lead.'
He spake in his greatness of soul, and they shouted, praising the rede
Of Herakles: then did Jason the warrior wight rejoice;
And he sprang to his feet, and he spake in their midst with eager voice: 350
'If indeed ye be minded on me this glorious charge to cast,
Let our voyaging tarry no more; suffice the delays overpast.
But now, even now, let us offer to Phœbus the sacrifice meet,
And prepare us a feast even here; and, while yet tarry the feet
Of my thralls, overseers of my steading, which bear in charge my command
Fitly to choose for us beasts from the herd, and to drive to the strand,
We will launch on the sea our ship, we will set up her tackling therein,
And thwart by thwart cast lots for the place each oarsman shall win.
To Apollo, the Seafarers' Saviour, uppile we then on the beach
An altar; for whatso I needs must do hath he promised to teach, 360
And to show us the paths of the sea, if first with sacrifice
I seek unto him, or ever I strive with the king for the prize.'
So spake he, and turned him first to the work; and, his call to obey,

The heroes arose, and their garments row upon row heaped they
On a smooth rock-shelf: the waves of the sea beat not thereon;
But the dash of the stormy brine had cleansed it long agone.
Then, giving heed to the counsels of Argus, stoutly they braced
The ship with a hawser deftly twisted that girded her waist;
For they strained it from side to side, that the beams to the bolts might hold
Fast, and withstand the might of the meeting surge on-rolled. 370
And a trench, in compass as great as the width of the galley, they delved;
And overagainst her prow to the sea so far it shelved
As the space that the hull should run, by the might of their hands on-sped:
And deepening ever afront of her stern they scooped that bed.
And smoothly-shaven rollers they laid in the furrow arow.
Then down on the foremost rollers slowly they tilted her prow,
That adown them one after other with one smooth rush she might slide.
Thereafter above did they pass the oars from side to side;
To the tholes did they lash them, outstanding a cubit on either hand;
And to right of the ship and to left at these did they take their stand; 380
And with chest and with hands against them they bare, and to and fro
Went Tiphys the while, to shout in the season the yo-heave-ho.
Then gave he the word with a mighty shout, and the youths forthright
Drave her with one rush down, as they thrust with their uttermost might,
From her berth in the sand, as with feet hard-straining strongly they stept
Forcing her forward, and Pelian Argo seaward swept
Full swiftly, and shouted they all, as to right and to left they leapt.
And under the massy keel's heavy grinding groaned aloud
The rollers, and spirted about them the smoke in a dusky cloud
'Neath the crushing weight: and into the sea she slid, and her crew 390
Back with the hawsers warped her, and stayed her as onward she flew.

Then the oars to the tholes they fitted on either side, and the mast
And the well-fashioned sails, and the tackling withal, therein
they cast.
But soon as with diligent heed they had ordered all things so,
First cast they the lots for the thwarts whereat each man should row,
Allotting one unto two men still; but the midmost thwart
For Herakles chose they first, from the rest of the heroes apart;
And Ankaius the dweller in Tegea-town for his fellow they chose.
So the midmost place of the benches they left unchallenged to those,
Neither cast for them lots; and with one consent of the voices 400
of them
Unto Tiphys was given the helm of the galley of goodly stem.
Then did they heap of the stones of the shingle, and, nigh at hand
To the sea, an altar they reared to Apollo the Lord of the Strand,
Who is called the Lord of the farers a-shipboard withal, and in haste
Billets of olive-wood sapless and dry thereon they placed.
And by this were the herdmen of Aison's son drawn nigh thereto
Bringing oxen twain from the herd; and these the young men drew
And set them beside the altar; and others stood thereby
With the water of sacrifice and the meal. And now drew nigh
Jason, and unto Apollo his fathers' god did he cry: 410
'Hearken, O King, who in Pagasae dwellest, whose fair halls be
In the city Aisonian, named of my sire, who didst promise to me,
When I sought unto thee at Pytho, to point me my journey's goal
And fulfilment; for thou, even thou, to the emprise didst kindle
my soul.
Now therefore my ship with my comrades safe and sound bring thou
Thither, and back unto Hellas again: and to thee do we vow,
For as many of us as shall win safe home, on thine altar to lay
Burnt offerings so many of goodly bulls: therewithal will I pay
At Pytho thy shrine, and Ortygia, other gifts beyond price.
Come then, Far-smiter, accept at our hands this sacrifice, 420
Which now, at our going abroad, for the sake of this our ship
We offer, our first of all: and with prosperous weird may I slip
The hawsers, by thy devising: and soft bid blow the breeze
Whereby we may fare on ever through calm of summer seas.'

With the prayer then cast he the meal: and now for the slaughtering these
Girded themselves, Ankaius the mighty, and Herakles.
And this with his club on the forehead smote the steer mid-head;
And heavily all in a heap to the earth it dropped down dead.
And Ankaius hewed with his brazen axe at the second steer
On the broad neck: clean through the sinews strong thereof did it shear;
And there on the earth, with horns doubled under its chest, it lay.
And swiftly their comrades severed the throats, and the skins did they flay,
And they sundered the joints, and they carved, and the sacred thighs they cut out,
And they laid them together, and closely with fat they wrapped them about,
And burnt on the cloven wood: drink-offerings unmingled of wine
Poured Aison's son; and Idmon rejoiced, beholding shine
The splendour that gleamed all round from the sacrifice and the smoke,
As forth for an omen of good in wavering wreaths it broke.
And the purpose of Leto's son, nothing doubting, straightway he spoke:
'For you 'tis ordained of the doom of the Gods and of each man's fate
Hither to win with the Fleece; but meanwhile lie in wait
Toils without number, as thither ye fare, and as backward ye hie.
But for me by the hateful doom of a God is it fated to die
Far hence, I know not where, on the Asian mainland shore.
Yea, this is my doom: by birds evil-boding I knew it before;
Yet from my fatherland went I: to sail in your galley I came,
That so to mine house might be left the renown of a hero's name.'
He spake, and the young men, hearing the words of the prophet, were glad
For their home-return, but for Idmon's doom were their hearts made sad.
And so, at the hour when the sun from his noon-halt sinketh adown,

And over the harvest-lands the long rock-shadows are thrown,
As the sun to the eventide dusk slow-slideth aslant from the sky,
Even then did the heroes all on the sands of the beach pile high
A couch of the wildwood leaves, and in front of the surf-line hoar
Row upon row lay down, and beside them was measureless store
Of meats, and of sweet strong wine which the cupbearers poured for them out
From the pitchers: thereafter they told, as each man's turn came about,
Story and legend, as young men oft at the feast and the bowl
Will take their delight, when insatiate violence is far from their soul.
But there was Aison's son, as a man in a nightmare dream, 460
Struggling with deep dark thoughts, and as one distraught did he seem;
And Idas marked him askance, and he shouted in scoffing tone:
'What thoughts to and fro in thine heart art thou turning, thou Aison's son?
Speak out in our midst thy mind! Hath fear in thy spirit awoke
Overmastering thee—that thing which dazeth dastard folk?
Be witness my furious spear, wherewithal beyond others I win
Renown in the wars—nor is Zeus so present a helper therein,
Nor so mighty to save as my spear—that on thee no deadly bane
Shall light, nor shall any strife of thine hands be striven in vain,
While Idas attendeth thee, not though against thee a God should 470 arise.
Such a helper is this thou hast won from Arênê for thine emprise.'
He spake, and the brimming beaker with both hands lifted he up,
And the strong wine drank unmingled, and dashed with the dew of the cup
Were his lips and his swarthy cheeks: but a startled clamour broke
From all together; and openly Idmon rebuked him, and spoke:
'Beshrew thee!—thy thoughts thus soon to thyself are deadly and fell!
Hath the strong wine caused thy reckless heart for thy ruin to swell
In thy breast, and eggeth thee on to set the Gods at nought?
Other words of comfort there be wherewithal a man might have sought

To hearten his friend ; but thy words were wholly presumptuous- 480
bold !
So blustered, as telleth the tale, against the Blessèd of old
The sons of Alôeus : and thou—thou art nothing so mighty as they
In manhood : yet both did the swift shafts overmaster and slay
Of the Son of Latona, though giants they were and passing strong.'
Then Aphareus' son brake forth into laughter loud and long,
And blinking upon him in drunken wise flung back the jeer :
'Come now, by thy deep divination reveal unto me, thou seer,
If the Gods for me also be bringing to pass such doom as that
Which was dealt of that father of thine to the sons that Alôeus begat.
And bethink thee how thou shalt escape from mine hands alive, 490
if we find
Thee guilty of boding a prophecy vain as the idle wind ! '
Wrathfuller waxed he in railing : and now had the strife run high,
But amidst of their wrangling their comrades with loud indignant cry,
With Aison's son, restrained them :—and lo, with his lyre upheld
In his left hand, Orpheus arose, and the fountain of song upwelled.
And he sang how in the beginning the earth and the heaven
and the sea
In the selfsame form were blended together in unity,
And how baleful contention each from other asunder tore ;
And he sang of the goal of the course in the firmament fixed evermore
For the stars and the moon, and the printless paths of the 500
journeying sun,
And how the mountains arose, how rivers that babbling run,
They and their Nymphs, were born, and whatso moveth on Earth ;
And he sang how Ophion at first, and Eurynomê, Ocean's birth,
In lordship of all things sat on Olympus' snow-crowned height ;
And how Ophion must yield unto Kronos' hands and his might,
And she unto Rhea, and into the Ocean's waves plunged they.
O'er the blessed Titan-gods these twain for a space held sway,
While Zeus as yet was a child, while yet as a child he thought,
And dwelt in the cave Dictaean, while yet the time was not
When the Earth-born Cyclops the thunderbolt's strength to his 510
hands should give,

Even thunder and lightning: by these doth Zeus his glory receive.
Low murmured the lyre, and slept, and the voice divine was still:
But moveless the heads of them all are bending forward, and thrill
Their eager-listening ears, through the hush as they strain, in thrall
To the spell; such wondrous glamour the song hath cast over all.
And a little thereafter they mingled, even as is meet and right,
The wine, and poured on the tongues where the altar-fires blazed bright.
Then turned they to sleep, and around them were folded the wings of the night.
But when radiant Dawn with her flashing eyes on the steeps looked down
Of Pelion's crests, and, washed by the wind, the forelands that frown 520
Over the tossing sea rose sharp and clear to view,
Then Tiphys awoke, and he hasted the Argo's hero-crew
To hie them aboard, and to range the oars in order due.
And a weird dread cry from the haven of Pagasae rang to them; yea,
From Pelian Argo herself came a voice, bidding hasten away:
For within her a beam divine had been laid, which Athênê brought
From the oak Dodonaean, and into the midst of her stem was it wrought.
So the heroes went up to the thwarts, and twain after twain arow,
Even as fell the places by lot but a little ago,
Orderly ranged sat down, and by each was his harness of fight. 530
On the midmost Ankaius, and next him Herakles' giant might
Sat, and beside him he laid his club; and the keel of the ship
Under his massy tread plunged deep. And now did they slip
The hawsers, and poured on the sea the wine. Tear-dimmed that day
Were Jason's eyes, from the fatherland-home as he turned them away.
And these—as the youths that in Pytho begin unto Phœbus the dance,
In Ortygia, or there where Ismenus' ripples in sunlight glance,
Hand in hand to the notes of the lyre his altar around
With rhythmical fall of the feet swift-circling beat the ground,—
So smote with the oars, by the lyre of Orpheus timing the stroke, 54

The sea's wild water, and over the blades the surges broke.
And on this side and that with the foam the dark brine seething flashed;
Like muttered thunder it sounded by strokes of the mighty updashed.
And glanced in the sun like flame, as the ship winged onward her flight,
Their armour: the wake far-weltering ever behind gleamed white,
As an oft-trodden path through a grassy plain lieth clear in sight.
And all the Gods that day from the height of the heaven looked down
On the ship, and the might of the demigod heroes, the men of renown,
Sailing the sea; and afar on the crests of the hill-tops lone
The Maids of the Mountain, the Pelian Nymphs, in amaze looked on 550
At the work of Athênê Itônis, the heroes' goodly array,
As the ashen blades in their hands kept time with measured sway.
Yea, and there came one down from the mountain's height to the shore,
Even Cheiron, Philyra's son, and plashed the surf-wash hoar
On his feet, as his broad hand waving many a farewell sent,
And he shouted, 'Good speed, and a sorrowless home-return!' as they went.
And there was his wife, with Peleus' babe in her arms held high,
Achilles, waving a greeting as sped his sire thereby.
So when they had rounded the headland, and left the haven behind
By the cunning and wisdom of Hagnias' son the prudent of mind,— 560
Even of Tiphys, who swayed in the master-craftsman's grip
The helm smooth-shaven, to guide unswerving the course of the ship,—
Then set they up in the centre-block the towering mast,
And on either hand strained taut the stays, and they lashed them fast;
And the sail they unfurled therefrom, from the yard-arm spreading it wide.
And a breeze shrill-piping upsprang, and the sheets upon either side

O'er the polished pins on the deck then cast they in order meet;
And past the long Tisaian ness did they restfully fleet.
And Orpheus, in song whose rhythmical cadence kept time to the lyre,
Sang of the Saviour of Ships, the Child of the Glorious Sire, 570
Artemis, she that hath those crags of the sea in her keeping,
The Lady that wardeth Iolkos-land. And the fishes leaping
Up from the deep sea came, and, drawn by the spell of the lay,
Both small and great followed gambolling over the watery way.
And as when in the track of a shepherd, the warder of flocks on the wold,
Follow sheep that have fed to the full of the grass, a throng untold,
And he goeth before with his shrill reed piping them home to the fold,
As sweetly he fluteth a shepherd's strain,—so over the seas
Followed the fishes: on wafted her ever the chasing breeze.
And ere long melting in haze the Pelasgians' land of corn 580
Sank out of sight; and past Mount Pelion's cliffs were they borne
Aye running onward; and sank in the offing the Sepian strand,
And sea-girt Skiathos rose, and a far-away gleam of sand,
The Peiresian beach and Magnesian, clear in the summer air
On the mainland; and lo, the barrow of Dolops: at eventide there
Beached they the ship, for against them the veering breeze had turned.
And they honoured the dead, and victims of sheep in the gloaming they burned,
While the sea-surge stormily tossed. Two days to and fro on the shore
They loitered, but ran on the third their galley asea once more;
And the broad sail spread they on high, and the keel from the 590 strand shot away:
Men call it 'The Launching of Argo'—Aphetai—unto this day.
Onward they ran, ever onward: they left Meliboia behind;
They caught but a glimpse of the foam-flecked beach of the stormy wind:
And with dawning on Homolê looked they, and lo, it was looming anigh;

Broad-couched on the breast of the waters it lay as they passed it by.
Thereafter full soon by the outfall of Amyrus' flood must they fly.
Eurymenê then, and the surf-tormented gorges they spied
Of Olympus' and Ossa's seaward face: wind-wafted they ride
By the slopes of Pallênê; beyond Kanastra's foreland-height
They passed, running lightly before the breath of the breeze in the night. 600
And before them at dawn on-speeding the pillar of Athos rose,
The Thracian mountain: its topmost peak's dark shadow it throws
Far as a merchantman goodly-rigged in a day might win,
Even to Lemnos' isle, and the city Myrinê therein.
And the wind blew all that day till the folds of the darkness fell,
Blew ever fresh, and the sail strained over the broad sea-swell.
Howbeit the wind's breath failed them at going down of the sun:
So to Lemnos the craggy, the Sintian isle, by rowing they won
There all the men of the nation together pitilessly
By the violent hands of the women were slain in the year gone by; 610
Forasmuch as the hearts of the men from their lawful wives had turned,
And in love for their captive handmaids with baleful passion they burned,
Maids that themselves from the Thracian land in foray had brought
Oversea:—'twas the wrath of the Cyprian Queen that curse had wrought,
Because that for long they had left her unhonoured by sacrifice:—
Ah hapless, whose hungering jealousy craved that woeful price!
For not with the captives their husbands alone for the sin did they slay,
But every male therewithal, lest perchance in the coming day
Out of these might arise an avenger for that grim murder's sake.
In one alone for an aged sire did compassion awake, 620
Hypsipylê, daughter of Thoas, the king of the folk of the land.
In an ark did she send him to drift o'er the sea from the murder-strand,
If he haply might 'scape. And fisher-folk saved him and brought to the isle
Which men call Sikinus now, but Oinoë named it erewhile;

For from Sikinus folk renamed it, the child whom the Maid of
the Spring,
Oinoë, bare, when she couched in love with Thoas the king.
So it came to pass that for these to tend the kine, and to wear
War-harness of brass, and to furrow the wheat-bearing land with
the share,
In the eyes of them all seemed task more light than Athênê's toil
Wherewithal were their hands aforetime busy: yet all the while 630
Across the broad sea ever they cast and anon their eyes
With a haunting fear lest the Thracian sails in the offing should rise.
So when they beheld the Argo's oars flashing down to their coast,
Forth from the gates of Myrinê straightway in one great host
Clad in their harness of battle down to the beach they poured
Like unto ravening Thyiads: they weened that the Thracian horde
Were come: and there was Hypsipylê clad in the war-array
Of Thoas her father: and all these speechless with wildered dismay
Streamed down,—such panic was wafted about them all that day.
But forth of the galley the while had the chieftains sent to the shore 640
Aithalides, their herald swift, the man who bore
Charge of their messages, yea, and the wand they committed to him
Of Hermes his sire, who had given him memory never made dim
Of all things:—yea, nor forgetfulness swept even now o'er his soul
Of long-left Acheron's flow, where the torrents unspeakable roll.
For the doom of his spirit is fixed, to and fro evermore is it swept,
Now numbered with ghosts underground, now back to the light
hath it leapt,
To the beams of the sun among living men:—but why should I tell
The story of Aithalides that all men know full well?
Of him was Hypsipylê won to receive that sea-borne array 650
As waned the day to the gloaming: yet not with the new-born day
Unmoored they the ship for the North-wind's breathing to waft
away.
Through the city the daughters of Lemnos into the folkmote
pressed,
And there sat down, as Hypsipylê's self sent forth her behest.
So when they were gathered in one great throng to the market-stead,

For their counselling straightway she rose in the midst of t
all, and she said :
'Friends, now, an ye will, good store of gifts to the
give we,
Even such as is meet that the farers a-shipboard should bear overse
Even meats and the sweet strong wine, that without our towers s
They may bide, nor for need's sake passing amidst of us to and fr
May know of us all too well, and our evil report shall go
Afar, for a terrible deed have we wrought, and in no wise, I trow
Good in their sight shall it seem, if they haply shall hear the tale
Lo, this is our counsel, and this, meseemeth, best shall avail.
But if any amidst you hath counsel that better shall serve our nee
Let her rise ; for to this have I summoned you, even the giving
of rede.'
So spake she, and sat her down on the ancient chair of stone
That of old was her sire's, and Polyxo her nurse uprose thereupon.
On her wrinkle-shrivelled feet she halted for very eld
Bowed over a staff ; but with longing for speech the heart in her
swelled.
And hard by her side were there sitting ancient maidens four,
Virgins, whose heads with the thin white hair were silvered o'er.
And amidst of the folkmote stood she, and up from her crook-
bowed back
Feebly a little she lifted her neck, and in this wise spake :
'Gifts, even as unto the lady Hypsipylê seemeth meet,
Send we to the strangers, for thus were it better their coming to greet.
But you—by what art or device shall ye save your souls alive
If a Thracian host burst on you, or cometh in battle to strive
Some other foe ?—there be many such chances to men that befall,
Even as now yon array cometh unforeseen of us all.
But if one of the Blessèd should turn this affliction away, there
remain
Countless afflictions beside, far worse than the battle's strain.
For when through the gates of the grave the older women
have passed,
And childless the younger have won to a joyless eld at the last,

How then will ye live, O hapless?—what, will the beasts freewilled
On their own necks cast the yoke, to the end that your lands may be tilled?
And the furrow-sundering share will they drag through the heavy loam?
And, as rolleth the year round, straight will they bring you the harvest home?
Now, albeit from me the Fates still shrink as in loathing and fear,
Yet surely on me, when the feet draw nigh of another year, 690
The earth shall lie, when the burial rites have been rendered to me,
Even as is due, and the evil days I shall not see.
But for you which be younger, I counsel you, give good heed unto this,
For that now at your feet an open way of deliverance there is,
If ye will but commit your dwellings and all your spoil to the guard
Of the strangers, yea, and your goodly city for these to ward.'
She spake, and with clamour the folkmote was filled, for good in their eyes
Was the word, and straightway thereafter again did Hypsipylê rise,
And her voice pealed over the multitude, stilling the mingled cries:
'If in sooth in the sight of you all well-pleasing is this same rede, 700
Unto the ship straightway a messenger hence will I speed.'
To Iphinoê which waited beside her spake she her hest:
'Up, Iphinoê, and to yonder man bear this my request,
That he come to our town, even he who is chief of the strangers' array,
For the word that pleaseth the heart of my people to him would I say.
Yea, and his fellows bid thou to light in friendship down
On our shore, if they will, and to enter undismayed our town.'
She spake, and dismissed the assembly, and homeward she wended her way;
But Iphinoê to the Minyans went; and they bade her say
What was the mind wherewithal she was come, and what her need. 710
And straightway she told them the words of her message with eager speed:
'The daughter of Thoas, Hypsipylê, sent me hither away

To summon the lord of your ship, and the captain of your array,
That the will of her folk she may tell him, their heart's desire this day.
Yea, and his fellows she biddeth to light in friendship down
On our shore, if they will, and to enter undismayed our town.'
So spake she, and fair in the sight of them all was the word that she said;
For they deemed that Hypsipylê reigned in the room of Thoas dead,
His daughter, his well-beloved; and they hasted Jason to meet
The island-queen, and they dight them to follow their captain's feet. 720
Then he flung o'er his shoulders the web by the Goddess Itonian wrought;
In the clasp of a brooch were the folds of the purple of Pallas caught,
Which she gave, when for Argo's building the keel-props first she dight,
And taught him with rule of the shipwright to measure her timbers aright.
More easy it were in sooth on the sun at his rising to gaze
Than to fasten thine eyes on the flush of its glory, its splendour-blaze.
For the fashion thereof in the midst was fiery crimson glow,
And the top was of purple throughout; and above on the marge and below
Picture by picture did many a broidered marvel show.
For therein were the Cyclopes bowed o'er their work that perisheth not, 730
Forging the levin of Zeus the King, and so far was it wrought
In its fiery splendour, that yet of its flashes there lacked but one:
And the giant smiths with their sledges of iron were smiting thereon;
While forth of it spurts as of flaming breath ever leapt and anon.
And there were the sons of Asôpus' daughter Antiopê set,
Amphion and Zethus: and Thêbê, with towers ungirded as yet,
Stood nigh them; and lo, the foundations thereof were they laying but now
In fierce haste. Zethus had heaved a craggy mountain's brow
On his shoulders: as one hard straining in toil did the image appear.

And Amphion the while to his golden lyre sang loud and clear, 740
On-pacing; and twice so great was the rock that followed anear.
And next Kythereia with tresses heavily drooping was shown;
And the buckler of onset of Arês she bare: from her shoulder the zone
Of her tunic over her left arm fell with a careless grace
Low over her breast; and ever she seemed on the shield to gaze,
On the face that out of its brazen mirror smiled to her face.
And therein was a herd of shaggy kine; for the winning thereof
Elektryon's sons and Teleboan raiders in battle strove:
For these were defending their own; but the Taphian rovers were fain
To rob them; and drenched was the dewy meadow with that 750
red rain.
But with that overmastering host were the herdmen striving in vain.
And therein had been fashioned chariots twain in the race that sped.
And Pelops was guiding the car that afront in the contest fled;
And Hippodameia beside him rode that fateful race.
And rushing behind him Myrtilus scourging his steeds gave chase;
And Oinomaus with him had couched his lance with a murderous face.
But, as snapt at the nave the axle, aslant was he falling in dust,
Even as at Pelops' back he was aiming the treacherous thrust.
And therein was Phœbus Apollo, a slender stripling yet,
Shooting at him who the ravisher's hand to the veil had set 760
Of his mother, at Tityos the giant, whom Elarê bare; but the Earth
Nursed him, and hid in her womb, and gave to him second birth.
And Phrixus the Minyan was there; and it seemed that unto the ram
He verily hearkened; it seemed that a voice from the gold-fleeced came.
Thou wert hushed to behold them—wouldst cheat thy soul with the hope that perchance
Forth of the lifeless lips would break the utterance
Of speech—ay, long wouldst thou gaze in expectation's trance.

Such was the gift of Athênê, the Goddess Itonian's toil.
And a lance far-leaping he grasped in his right hand, given erewhile
Of the maid Atalanta on Mainalus' height for the pledge of a friend. 770
Gladly she met him, for sorely her soul desired to wend
On the Quest: howbeit the hero himself withheld the maid,
For the peril of bitter strife for her love's sake made him afraid.
So he hied him to go to the town, as the radiant star to behold
Which a maid, as she draweth her newly-woven curtain's fold,
Beholdeth, as over her dwelling upward it floateth fair;
And it charmeth her eyes, flashing out of the depths of the darkling air
Flushed with a crimson glory: the maid's heart leapeth then
Lovesick for the youth who is far away amid alien men,
Her betrothed, unto whom her parents shall wed her on some 780 glad day:
So as a star was the hero treading the cityward way.
So when he had passed through the gates, and within the city he came,
The women thereof thronged after, and wafted him blithe acclaim,
Having joy of the stranger: but earthward ever his eyes he cast,
Pacing unfaltering on till he came to the palace at last
Of Hypsipylê: then at the hero's appearing the maids flung wide
The gates and the fair-fashioned boards of the leaves on either side.
Then through the beautiful hall did Iphinoê lead on
Swiftly, and caused him to sit on a tinsel-glittering throne
Facing the Queen; and Hypsipylê turned her eyes away, 790
For the maiden blood flushed hot in her cheek. But her shame that day
Tied not her tongue, and with crafty-winsome words did she say:
'Stranger, wherefore so long have ye tarried without our towers?
Forasmuch as no man dwelleth within this city of ours;
But these have betaken them hence to dwell on the Thracian shore,
And there are they ploughing the wheat-bearing lands. I will tell thee o'er
The evil tale, to the end ye also may understand.
In the days when Thoas my father was king o'er the folk of the land,

My people in ships from Lemnos over the sea-ridges rode,
And harried the homes of the Thracians that overagainst us abode ; 800
And with booty untold they returned, and with many a captive maid.
But the curse of a baneful Goddess upon them now was laid ;
For the Cyprian caused on their souls heart-ruining blindness to fall,
That they hated their lawful wives, and forth from bower and hall
At the beck of their folly they drove the Lemnian matrons away,
And beside those spear-won thralls in the bed of love they lay—
Cruel ones ! Sooth, long time we endured it, if haply again,
Though late, their hearts might be turned ; but our wrong and our bitter pain
Waxed evermore twofold ; and the children of true-born blood
In our halls were dishonoured, and grew up amidst us a bastard brood. 810
Yea, and our maids unwedded, and widowed wives thereto,
Uncared for about our city wandered to and fro.
No father had heeded, no, never so little, his daughter's plight,
Not though before his eyes he beheld her slain outright
By a tyrannous stepdame's hands : and sons would defend no more
A mother from outrage and shame, as they wont in the days of yore.
No love for a sister then the heart of the brother bore.
But only the handmaid-thralls in the home found grace in their sight,
In the dance, in the market-place, and whenso the banquet was dight.
Till at last some God in our hearts this desperate courage awoke, 820
No more to receive them, when back they returned from the Thracian folk,
Our towers within, that so they might heed the right, or begone
Hence to another land, even they and their thralls war-won.
Then required they of us their sons, even what manchild soe'er
Had been left in the town, and returned unto Thrace ; and to this day there
The Lemnian men on the snowy Thracian corn-lands dwell.
Then tarry ye sojourning here : and if haply it please thee well
To abide in the land, and it seem to thee good, of a surety thine
Shall be Thoas my father's honour. I ween this land of mine
Thou shalt scorn not, for passing fruitful it is above all the rest 830
Of the myriad isles that lie on the broad Aegean's breast.

But come now, go to thy galley, and tell these words of ours
Unto thy comrades, nor longer tarry without our towers.'
She ended, with fair words veiling the deed of murder dread
Done on the men; and the hero answered the queen, and he said:
'Hypsipylê, passing welcome this thy request shall be
Which thou tenderest us, whose desire withal is now unto thee.
Back through thy town will I come, when an end I have made to say
All this to my fellows in order: howbeit let all the sway
And the lordship be thine in the island. I make not in scorn 840
my request,
But a sore task thrusteth me onward still, and I may not rest.'
He spake, and the queen's right hand hath he touched, and aback
to the strand
He hath turned him to go; and around him the maidens on
either hand
Danced blithely, a throng unnumbered, till forth of the gates he
had strode.
Thereafter the women loaded them wains smooth-running, and rode
Down to the beach, and gifts of greeting they bare good store,
When now to his fellows the hero had told the message o'er,
Which Hypsipylê spake unto him when she sent and bade him come.
And with little ado the maidens drew the heroes home
To their halls; for sweet desire did the Lady of Cyprus awake, 850
For a grace to Hephaistus the Lord of Craft, that Lemnos might
take
New life, and unruined be peopled of men once more for his sake.
Now into Hypsipylê's royal palace Aison's son
Hath passed, and the rest, as it happed unto each man, so are
they gone,
Save Herakles only; for still with the ship would the hero abide,
For he willed it so, and a few his chosen comrades beside.
And straightway rejoiced the city with dance and with festival,
And was filled with sacrifice-steam to the Deathless: but most
of all
Honoured they Hêrê's glorious son, and atonement's price
To the Cyprian Queen they paid with song and with sacrifice. 860

And ever from day unto day did the heroes their sailing forbear,
Loth to depart; and long had they tarried loitering there,
But Herakles gathered his comrades, and drew from the women apart,
And with words of upbraiding he spake, and rebuked them indignant of heart:
'What, sirs, is it blood of kindred spilt that maketh us roam
From our land?—or came ye, because that ye found no brides at home,
Hitherward, scorning the maidens of Greece? Doth it please you to toil
Here dwelling, and driving the plough through the soft smooth Lemnian soil?
Good sooth, but little renown shall we win of our tarrying
Here long time with the stranger women! No God will bring 870
That Fleece unto us, nor wrest from its warder, for our request!
Forth let us go each man to his place—*him* leave ye to rest
All day on Hypsipylê's couch, till he people from shore to shore
Lemnos with menfolk: great his renown shall be therefor!'
So did he chide with the band; was none dared meet his eye,
Neither look in his face, nor was any man found that essayed reply.
But straight from his presence, to make their departing ready, they went
In haste; and the women came running, so soon as they knew their intent.
And as when round beautiful lilies the wild bees hum at their toil,
From their hive in the rock forth pouring; the dew-sprent 880 meadow the while
Around them rejoiceth, and hovering, stooping, now and again
They sip of the sweet flower-fountains—in such wise round the men
Forth streamed the women with yearning faces, making their moan;
And with hands caressing and soft sad words did they greet each one,
Beseeching the Blessed to grant them a home-coming void of bane.
Yea, so doth Hypsipylê pray, as her clinging fingers strain
The hand of Jason, and stream her tears with the paring-pain:

'Go thou, and thee may the Gods with thy comrades scathless bring
Back to the home-land, bearing the Fleece of Gold to the king,
Even as thou wilt, and thine heart desireth: and this mine isle, 890
And my father's sceptre withal, shall wait for thee the while,
If haply, thine home-coming won, thou wouldst choose to come hither again.
Thou couldst gather from other cities a host unnumbered of men
Lightly—ah, but the longing shall never awaken in thee;
Yea, and mine own heart bodeth that this shall never be!
Yet O remember Hypsipylê whilst thou art far away,
And when home thou hast won; and leave me a word that thy love shall obey
With joy, if the Gods shall vouchsafe me to bear a son to my lord.'
Lovingly looked on her Aison's son, and he spake the word:
'Hypsipylê, so may the Gods bring all these blessings to be! 900
Howbeit a better wish than this frame thou for me;
Forasmuch as by Pelias' grace it sufficeth me still to live
In the home-land—only the Gods from my toils deliverance give!
But and if to return to the land of Hellas be not my doom,
Afar as I sail, and a fair manchild be the fruit of thy womb,
To Pelasgian Iolkos send him, when boyhood and manhood be met,
To my father and mother, to solace their grief,—if living yet
Haply he find them,—that so, in the stead of the prince their son,
They may win in their halls a dear one, to brighten the hearth left lone.'
He spake, and was gone; and afront of his fellows he strode to 910 the ship,
And the rest of the chiefs followed on, and the oars in their hands did they grip,
Row upon row as they sat; and the hawsers did Argus cast
Loose from the rock brine-lashed; and mightily then and fast
Fell they to smiting with oars long-bladed the seething wave.
And at even by Orpheus' counsel the keel ashore they drave
On the isle of Elektra the daughter of Atlas, that there they might learn

The mystic rites whose unveiling is not soul-daunting nor stern,
And safelier so might voyage over the chill grey sea :—
No more will I speak of the Hidden Things—but a blessing be
Upon that same isle, and the Gods there dwelling, to whom belong 920
Those rites whereof it is not vouchsafed that we tell in song.
And from thence o'er the Black Sea's depths unfathomed they sped with the oar,
To leftward keeping the land of Thrace, and to rightward the shore
Of Imbros overagainst it ; and, even as sank the sun,
Unto the long sea-foreland of Chersonese they won.
There did the strong swift south-wind blow, and the sail they spread
To the breeze, and into the outward-rushing waters they sped
Of Athamas' daughter : and lo, astern with the morning light
The outsea lay, and along Rhœteion's beach in the night
They coasted, and still on their right the land Idaean lay. 930
And they left Dardania behind, and Abydos-ward steered they.
By Perkotê in that same night, and Abarnis' stretches of sand
Onward they glided, and past Pityeia the hallowed land.
And the selfsame night, as with sails and with oars sped Argo on,
Through the sea-gorge darkly-swirling of Hellespont they won.
Now within the Propontis an island there is, both high and steep ;
Short space from the corn-blest Phrygian land doth it rise from the deep
Seaward-sloped : to the mainland stretched a neck of land
Low as the wash of the sea ; so the place hath a twofold strand.
And beyond the waterfloods of Aisêpus the river they lie. 940
The Hill of the Bears it is called of them that dwell thereby.
And cruel oppressors and fierce have there their robber-hold,
Earth-born, a marvel great for the dwellers around to behold.
Six mighty arms each monster uplifteth against a foe,
Even two from his brawny shoulders that spring, and therebelow
Four other, that out of his sides exceeding terrible grow.
Now Dolian men on the isthmus abode, and about the plain ;
And amidst them did Kyzikus, hero-son of Aineus, reign,
The son whom Ainêtê, the daughter of godlike Eusôrus, bare.
But these men the Earth-born giants, how mighty and dreadful soe'er, 950

In no wise harried: their shield and defender Poseidon became,
For himself had begotten of old the first of the Dolian name.
Thitherward Argo, as chased by the Thracian breezes she fled,
Pressed, and the goodly haven received her as onward she sped.
And their light-weight anchor-stone did they cast away thereby
By Tiphys' behest, and they left it beside the fountain to lie,
By Artakia's spring; and another they chose, huge, meet for their need.
Howbeit their first, by Archer Apollo's oracle-rede,
The Ionian Nele'ids laid thereafter, a hallowed stone,
In the shrine of Athênê, Jason's friend, as was meet to be done.
And in all lovingkindness the Dolians came, and to meet them pressed
Kyzikus' self, when their lineage he heard, and was ware of the Quest,
And knew what heroes were these; and with glad guest-welcome they met,
And besought them to speed in their rowing a short space onward yet,
And to fasten the hawser within the city's haven fair.
To Apollo the Lord of Landing they builded an altar there:
By the strand they upreared it, and there did the smoke of the sacrifice rise;
And sweet strong wine did the king's self give them, their need to suffice,
And sheep therewithal: for an oracle rang in his ears—'In the day
When a godlike band of heroes shall come, meet thou their array,
With welcome of love, and thou shalt not bethink thee at all of the fray.'
And, like unto Jason, the soft down bloomed on the young king's chin;
Neither yet was he gladdened with laughter of children his halls within;
For the pangs of the travailing hour not yet to his bride had been known,
Even to the lady born of Merops, Perkosius' son,
Fair-tressed Kleitê. But now had she passed from her sire's halls forth

On the mainland-shore, when he won her with gifts of priceless worth.
But for all this left he his bridal bower and the bed of his bride,
And arrayed them a banquet, and cast from his heart all fear aside.
And they questioned each other, the king and the heroes. Of 980
them would he learn
The end whereunto they voyaged, and Pelias' bidding stern.
Of the dwellers around, and their cities, they asked and were fain
to be taught
Touching all the gulf of Propontis the wide: but the king knew nought
Beyond to tell them, albeit with eager desire they sought.
So at dawn did they climb huge Dindymus' sides, with purpose to gaze
With their own eyes over the unknown sea and her trackless ways;—
But forth of the outer haven first their galley they rowed;—
Still Jason's Path is it named, that mountain-track they trode.
But the earth-born giants the while rushed down from the
mountain-side,
And the seaward mouth they blocked of the haven of Chytos the 990
wide
With crags, like men that lie in wait for a wolf in his lair.
Howbeit with them that were younger had Herakles tarried there;
And he leapt to his feet, and against them his back-springing
bow did he strain.
One after other he stretched them on earth; and the giants amain
Heaved up huge jagged rocks, and hurled them against their foe.
Yea, for that terrible monster-brood was nurtured, I trow,
Of Hêrê, the bride of Zeus, for a trial of Herakles.
Therewithal came the rest of their fellows, returning to battle
with these
Or ever they won the mountain-crest. To the slaughter they fell
Of the Earth-born brood, those heroes: with arrows some did 1000
they quell,
And some on the points of their spears they received, until they
had slain
All that to grapple of fight had rushed so furious-fain.
And even as when the woodmen with axes have smitten, and throw
The long beams down on the strand of the sea ranged row upon row,—

For the brine-sodden wood shall grip the strong bolts faster so,—
Even so at the entering-in of the foam-fringed haven they lay
One after other ; some in a huddled heap where the spray
Dashed over their heads and their breasts, the while, stretched high on the land,
Stiffened their limbs : there were some yet again, whose heads on the sand
Rested, the while in the heaving waters swayed their feet ;— 100
But doomed were they all alike for the birds' and the fishes' meat.
And the heroes, so soon as the peril afar from their emprise was driven,
Cast loose the hawsers of Argo before the breezes of heaven.
Forth shot she, and onward they drave, fast cleaving the broad sea-swell.
All day under canvas she ran : howbeit, as twilight fell
No longer the wind-rush steadily held, but the veering blast
Caught them, and swept them aback, till it brought them again at the last
To the guest-fain Dolian men. Then stepped they ashore in the gloom
Of the night ; and unto this day is it called the Rock of Doom
Round which the hawsers of Argo in blind haste now did they pass; 105
Neither did any man deem that the selfsame island it was ;
Nor yet were the Dolians ware that again in the night to their coast
The heroes were come, but haply they weened that a Makrian host
Of Pelasgian men for war had sailed to their land overseas :
Wherefore their armour they donned, and uplifted their hands against these.
And with onset of spears and with clashing of shields met they in the strife,
Like to the vehement blast of flame which hath leapt into life
Mid the copses dry, and the red tongues climb : and the battle-din then
Fearful and furious fell in the midst of the Dolian men.
Nor may Kyzikus now overleap his weird, and aback from the war 110
Win home to the bower of love and the arms of his bride any more.

But, even as he turned on him, full on the king leapt Aison's son,
And stabbed in the midst of his breast, and shattered was all the bone
Around the spear, and falling in death-throes down on the sands
He filled up the measure of Fate. To escape her resistless hands
Is vouchsafed unto none: as a wide snare compassed we are
with her bands.
Even so, as he weened that the bitterness now of death was past
At the hands of the heroes, lo, in her gin were his feet caught fast
In the night, as he battled with them, and many a champion withal
Was slain with the king; by Herakles' hands did Telekles fall, 1040
And fell Megabrontes; and Sphodris Akastus overthrew;
And Zelys, Gephyrus withal, the battle-swift Peleus slew.
Telamon's ashen spear through Basileus' heart is thrust;
Died Promeus by Idas, and Klytius laid Hyakinthus in dust;
And the Tyndarids twain slew Phlogius, slew Megalossakes;
And valiant Itymoneus fell before Oineus' son amid these,
And Artakes with him, a chieftain of men: and unto this day
Unto all these slain do the people the worship of heroes pay.
Then wavered the ranks and broke; then fled they in panic affright,
As before the swift-winged hawks doth a cloud of doves take flight. 1050
Through the gates in a huddled rout they poured, and the town
straightway
With the war-yell was filled, and backward rolled was the woe-
ful fray.
But at dawn were they ware, both these and those, of the cure-
less ill,
Of the ruinous error; and now did bitter anguish fill
The Minyan heroes, beholding before them Aineus' child
Stretched in the dust, and Kyzikus lying blood-defiled.
For three whole days with rending of hair did they mourn his doom,
Even they with the Dolian folk. Thereafter about his tomb
Three times in their brazen armour the round of lament did they
pace,
And buried him: funeral games held they in the selfsame place, 1060
As was meet, in the meadow-plain where yet before the eyes
Of the *folk of* the latter day doth the heap of his grave-mound rise.

Yea, neither would Kleitê his wife any more mid the living abide
Forlorn of her lord; but a woefuller evil she added beside
To the evil done, when clasping her neck with the noose she died
Ah, but the Wildwood Maids made moan for the beautiful dead
And of all the tears that to earth from their eyes for her sake
they shed
A fountain the Goddesses made, and the name of it far and wide
Hath been heard, even Kleitê, the name of a most unhappy bride.
Ah, that was the darkest day that from Zeus did ever befall
The daughters and sons of the Dolian race, and in none of them all
Was there spirit to taste of food, and their hands for a weary while
By reason of grief hung down, and forgat the millstone's toil:
But their lives dragged on, while untouched of the fire was the
food that they ate.
Yea, the Ionian folk that in Kyzikus dwell even yet,
When they pour drink-offerings year by year, at the city's mill
Grind ever their corn, for the querns in the houses of mourning
are still.
And the wild winds woke at the sound of their mourning to
shriek and to rave
Twelve days, twelve nights; and prisoned by wrath of wind and wave
Tarried the heroes from sailing, until, on the thirteenth night,
When the rest of the wanderers lay for the last time bowed by
the might
Of slumber on that drear shore, while watch and ward was kept
Of Akastus and Mopsus Ampykus' son over them that slept,—
Then over the golden head of Aison's son did there fly
A kingfisher: clear through the hush his happy-boding cry
Rang for the lulling of winds; and Mopsus hearkening caught
The shore-bird's note, and he knew it with happy omen fraught.
And a God's hand guided its wing, that it wheeled and shot to
the height
Of the Argo's stern, and thereon hath it stayed its arrowy flight.
And the seer touched Jason, there on the fleeces soft as he lay
Of the sheep, and from slumber he roused him with haste, and
thus did he say:

'Aison's son, thou must climb to the temple that standeth there
On Dindymus' rugged height, and make to the Mother thy prayer,
The fair-throned Mother of all the Blest: and the stormy blast
Shall be stilled. For but now hath a cry by mine ears on the night-wind passed,
The weird sea-kingfisher's cry; and around thy slumbering head
Wheeling its flight, it uttered the thing that my lips have said.
For swayed by her power be the winds, and the sea, and the earth below,
Yea also Olympus crowned with the everlasting snow.
And to her, when to heaven from her hills she ascendeth, doth Zeus give place, 1100
Even Kronos' son himself, and all the Deathless Race
Of the Blessèd in reverence bow before her awful face.'
So spake he: to hear that word the heart of Jason leapt.
Gladsome he sprang from his couch, and his comrades, there as they slept,
Did he waken in haste; and he told, as they gathered around him to hear,
The prophecy spoken of Mopsus Ampykus' son, the seer.
Then steers from the byre the young men drave, and with speed they pressed
Up the steep hill-path with the beasts, till they won to the mountain's crest.
From the Rock of Doom did others the hawsers of Argo slip:
To the Thracian haven they rowed, and leapt to the strand; and the ship 1110
There guarded they left, for there tarried behind of their fellows a few.
And from Dindymus saw they the Makrian cliffs, and full in view
The stretch of the Thracian Coast oversea on this side lay,
And the Bosporus misty-dim, and the blue hills far away
Of Mysia-land, and the river Aisêpus on that side flowed,
And the town and the plain Nepeian of Adresteia showed.
Then found they the sturdy stock of a vine in the forest that grew,
A tree exceeding old: with the axes the same did they hew

For the Mountain-goddess's sacred image: with cunning skill
Of the craftsman did Argus carve it; and so on the rugged hill
Did they set it up: for the shrine thereof stood tall oaks round,
Which of all trees root them the deepest beneath the face of the ground.
Then of loose stones built they an altar: with leaves from the oaken spray
They wreathed it around, and the sacrifice thereupon did they lay.
On the Mother majestic, on Dindymê's Queen, the while did they call,
Who dwelleth in Phrygia: on Tityas they cried, on Kyllênê withal,
Who alone be called the Dispensers of Doom—by the judgment-seat
Of the Mother Idaean who sit—by all that priesthood of Crete,
The Daktylians of Ida, born in the cave Dictaean of yore
When the Nymph Anchialê clutched in the throes of travail, and tore
With the fingers of either hand the earth by Oaxus' shore.
Knelt Aison's son to the Goddess, and prayed her with earnest cries
To turn the tempest away, on the flame of the sacrifice
As he poured the wine. And the youths therewithal at Orpheus' command
Trode round her altar the measure, an armour-sheathèd band,
And clashed with their swords on their shields, that the sound that boded them ill
Might be lost in the air, the wail for the dead, which the people still
In grief for their king sent up; for which cause unto this day
With timbrel and drum the Phrygians worship to Rhea pay.
And the Goddess of them that sought her was found, and inclined her ear
To the sacrifice-prayer: of her grace did tokens of good appear.
For the trees shed fruit in abundance down, and around their feet
The earth mid her tender grass with flowers unsown was sweet.
And the beasts of the wildwood came, forsaking thicket and lair,
Fawning with swaying tails: and another marvel there
Did the Goddess create, for that Dindymus never theretofore
With watersprings flowed; but now did a sudden torrent pour
From her thirsty crest, and the Fountain of Jason they name it still,

The folk that in after days dwell round that sacred hill.
In the Goddess's honour a feast on the Bears' Hill then dight they, 115
And Rhea the all-majestic they hymned: but at dawn of the day
Stilled were the winds, and with oars from the island sped they away.
Then hero was kindled with hero in gallant contention to try
Who last should be spent and refrain; for the peace of a windless sky
Laid level the swirls of the sea, and lulled to sleep the wave.
And putting their trust in the calm, ever onward and onward they drave
The ship by their might; and with her, through the brine as she darted and leapt,
Not even the storm-footed steeds of Poseidon the pace had kept.
Howbeit the surges awoke as from sleep, as the keen blasts blew,
Which swooped from the river-gorges as day to the evenfall drew: 116
And the heroes forspent with toiling refrained, save only one
Who by might of his hands tugged onward his weary comrades alone;
Even Herakles: quivered the strong-knit beams as he strained to the stroke.
But when, as they fled by the mainland-shore of the Mysian folk,
And Rhyndakus' outfall they sighted, and, huge against the sky,
Aigaion's cairn, past Phrygia a little, and slipped thereby,
Even then, through the furrows of roughened surge as he tugged and tore,
Snapped he the ashen blade, and, grasping the half of the oar
Yet in his hands, back Herakles fell, and the half swept down
The tossing wake of the ship. But he rose, and with angry frown 11
Sat gazing around, for his hands endured not idle to lie.
'Twas the hour when the delver or ploughman aback from the field doth hie
With joy to his hut, and his soul sore craveth the eventide meat,
And bow on the threshold his knees, and totter his weary feet.
All dust-besprent he beholdeth his cramped hands worn with toil,
With many a curse reviling the taskmaster Belly the while,—
Then came they to where in the land Kianian nestle her homes
'Neath Arganthônê, where Kios against the sea-tide foams.

Then as friends greet friends did the Mysians with kindly welcoming
Meet them, the people that dwelt in the land, and gifts did they bring, 1180
Even sheep, and wine without stint therewithal gave they for their need.
Then sapless logs did some of them gather, and grass from the mead
Did some bring in, whereof great store for their couches they mowed,
The while in the hands of some the whirling fire-sticks glowed.
Some mingled the wine in the mazer, and ready the feast they dight,
Doing sacrifice to Apollo as deepened the shades of night.
But Zeus' son spake to his comrades meetly the feast to prepare:
But into the forest himself hath hied, to the end that there,
Or ever he supped, for the grip of his hands he might fashion an oar.
Then found he a pine as he roved, and scant was the burden it bore 1190
Of boughs, nor with heavy-clustering leaves was its shade made dim;
But like to the shaft it rose of a poplar tall and slim:
Even such was the measure thereof to behold in height and in girth.
Swiftly his arrow-fraught quiver hath Herakles cast to the earth
With the shafts therein: from his shoulders the lion's hide did he strip.
With his brass-heavy club at its roots he smote, till he loosed earth's grip.
Low down did he grasp the stem about with either hand,
Putting trust in his might: with shoulder against it thrust did he stand
With feet wide set. From the ground, deep-rooted albeit it grew,
Hath his grip upheaved it with all the clods that clave thereto. 1200
And as when unawares the mast of a ship, in the very hour
When Orion's storm-fraught setting is working in baleful power,
Is struck from on high by a tempest's swiftly-swooping squall,
And with snapped stays rent from its box, and the wedges therewithal,
Even so he upwrenched that tree; and he gathered up arrows and bow,
And the lion's hide, and his club; and he hasted him backward to go.
But Hylas the while with a pitcher of brass from the throng hath hied
Seeking a spring's pure flow; for the feast of the eventide

To draw for him water against his return, and withal to prepare
With speed all things for the time when again his lord should 121
be there.
For in suchlike service did Herakles nurture the lad and train
From the day when, a captive child, by the hero's hand he was ta'en
From the home of his father Theodamas, slain in Dryopian land
Without ruth, when he dared for his ploughteam's sake 'gainst
the hero to stand.
For it fell, as Theodamas clave with the share the fallow field,
That mischief befell him; for Herakles came, and he bade him
to yield
The heifer he ploughed withal unto him in his heart's despite:
For against the Dryopian folk was he seeking occasion of fight,
For their bane, forasmuch as reckless of right in the land dwelt
they:—
But the story thereof should lead me far from my song astray. 122
So in haste to the fountain he hied him, and Pegae hight that spring
Of the people that dwell in the field thereabout: and the dancing-
ring
Of the Nymphs, as it chanced, was there; for all these loved
full well—
Even all the Nymphs that about that fair hill wont to dwell—
In hymns through the night-tide ringing to chant unto Artemis still.
But they which inherit the mountain-crest, or the rushing rill,
And the Forest-haunters, were ranged from the fountain far away.
But it fell that the Water-nymph came floating up that day
From the depths of the fair-flowing spring:—lo, over her bendeth
his face
In the rosy flush of its beauty, its manifold winsome grace. 123
For the full moon casting her beams from the height of the firmament
Smote him, and faintness of love on her soul the Cyprian sent,
And scarce she unravelled her thoughts in sweet confusion blent.
But over the fountain's brim as aforetime aslant hath he bowed,
And plunged in the ripple the pitcher: the water gurgled loud
As into the echoing brass it poured; and the Fountain-maid
Her left arm slid from the depths, and around his neck was it laid

In her yearning to kiss those dainty lips, while, clutched by her right,
Drawn down was his arm, and through swirling eddies he sank
from the light.
But his cry as he sank was heard of one of his comrades alone
Who trod that fountainward path, Polyphemus, Eilatus' son,
To meet that giant hero when back he should fare to the feast.
By Pegae, following the cry, hath he rushed, like a wildwood beast
Unto whom from far away hath been wafted the bleating of sheep,
And with famine afire he pursueth; howbeit he may not leap
On the prey, for already the shepherds have penned them safe
from the foe;
And in vehement rage must he moan and howl, till aweary he grow;
So Eilatus' son made vehement moan, and he roamed to and fro
About the place; and his voice rang piteous, broken with woe.
Then suddenly drew he his mighty blade, and he rushed to pursue,
If perchance he were seized of beasts, or from ambush a robber-crew
Had leapt on him faring alone, and were haling afar their prey.
Then, even as he shook in his hand his naked sword, in the way
Came Herakles' self to meet him, a giant form that sped
To the ship through the gloom; and he knew him, and straight-
way a tale most dread
He told, while laboured with heavy panting his heart, and he said:
'God help thee, that I first bring to thee tidings of bitter pain!
Hylas hath gone to the spring, and returned not alive again!
Or robbers have seized him, and hale him away to captivity,
Or evil beasts are rending:—I heard but now his cry.'
Upon Herakles' temples then did the great sweat-gouts upstart,
As he heard him speak, and the dark blood curdled about his heart.
In fury in flung to the earth the pine, and along that path
Rushed, whithersoever his feet might hurry his aimless wrath.
And as, stung by a gadfly, a bull rusheth onward frenzy-stirred
Forsaking the meadows and marshlands, the while of herdsman
or herd
He taketh no heed, pressing on in his wild course now without check,
Now making a moment's stand, and uplifting his massive neck,
He uttereth bellowings, mad with the sting of the cruel breese;

So he in his frenzy now would be plying his strong swift knees 127
Unresting, and now from his toil would he cease for a moment's space,
And shouted:—the mighty voice rang far through the lonely place.
Eftsoons the morning-star rose over the mountain's crest,
And the winds swept down from the gorges; and Tiphys cried on the rest
To get them aboard in haste, and to hearken the wind's behest.
So with eager speed they embarked, and the anchor-stones of the ship
Heaved they aboard, and the hawsers thereof in haste did they slip.
And the midst of the sail bellied out with the blast, and far away
From the sea-strand with joy by Poseidon's foreland wafted were they.
But it fell, in the hour when the dawn glad-eyed from the heaven 128
doth beam,
From the east uprising, and all the earth-ways clearer gleam,
And the dewy wolds are a-sparkle beneath her flashing sheen,
Then were they ware of those that forsaken unwares had been.
Then mighty contention arose, and an indignation-burst
Most vehement-fierce, that any should go, and forsake the first
Of their comrades in prowess. But Aison's son distraught with amaze
Spake never a word or bad or good in their evil case;
But devouring his soul he sat 'neath wilderment's heavy load.
Then Telamon's wrath waxed hot, and thus with the prince he chode:
'Ha! sit thou there at thine ease!—good sooth, for thy 129
profit was this,
That Herakles thus should be left; thou givest no counsel, I wis,
Lest haply his glory in Hellas should overshadow thee,
If the Gods peradventure vouchsafe us the home-return to see!—
What pleasure in words?—I will go, I only, with none of these
Thy comrades, who plotted with thee this treason to Herakles.'
He spake, and on Tiphys Hagnias' son he rushed, and his ire
Gleamed through his eyes as the leaping flame of the ravening fire.
And now to the land of the Mysian men had they won back again
In despite of the driving surge, and the head-wind's ceaseless strain;
But the two winged sons of Thracian Boreas rose thereupon, 130
And with fierce stern words from his purpose withheld they
Aiakus' son.

Unhappy they!—grim vengeance thereafter did Herakles wre
Upon these who withheld the rest which were fain for the lost to see
For when from the games over Pelias dead they were wending aga in
Homeward, in Tenos the sea-girt he slew them; and heaped
o'er the slain
The earth, and above that grave-mound reared he pillars twain,
The one whereof, a marvel exceeding for men to behold,
Sways to and fro in the blast when the North-wind whistleth cold.
Ay, so in the after-time these things were ordained to be.
But now did Glaukus appear unto them from the depths of the sea,
The servant of Nereus divine, the far-discerning seer.
High out of the waves his shaggy head and his breast did he rear
Even to the waist, and his brawny hand did the God stretch out
To the keel of the ship, and unto her eager crew did he shout:
'Wherefore be ye thus purposed against great Zeus' decrees
Unto Aiêtes' city to bring bold Herakles?
Lo, this is his weird—in the land of Argos labouring
To accomplish toils full twelve for Eurystheus the tyrannous king,
And to dwell with the Deathless Ones, if he bring to fulfilment yet
A few more toils: grieve ye not therefore with vain regret.
Polyphemus' weird likewise is to rear, where Kios doth fall
Into the sea, 'mid the Mysians a glorious city's wall,
And to find in the Chalybes' land the doom that endeth all.
But Hylas a Goddess-nymph of her love for her spouse hath taken,
For whose sake wandered away those twain unawares forsaken.'
Then downward he plunged, and he wrapped him about with
the waves white-wreathing,
And around him the darkling water foamed in eddies seething.
And he loosed from his hand the hollow ship through the brine to flee;
And the heroes were glad: then rose up Telamon hastily,
And Aiakus' son unto Jason strode, and his hand did he take
In the compassing grasp of his own, and embraced him, and thus
he spake:
'Be nowise wroth with me, Aison's son, if folly-distraught
I have sinned in mine ignorance: anguish exceeding upon me
hath wrought

To utter an arrogant word which I could not refrain: let us cast
To the winds my transgression, and knit be our hearts as in days
overpast.'

Answered him Aison's son, and in courteous wise spake he:
'Ah, friend, of a truth 'twas a bitter word that thou spakest to me,
When thou saidst in the midst of us all that a traitor I was unto him
Who to me was a friend!—yet I will not nurse wrath brooding grim,
Though vexed was my soul at the first; since not as for flocks of sheep 134
Didst thou chafe and wast wroth, nor for hoarded wealth of a
treasure-heap,
But all for a comrade's sake. I were fain thou wouldst champion so
Even me, if need should be ever, against another foe.'

He spake, and they sat them down, as in days overpast made one.
But their lost—by the counsel of Zeus, Polyphemus Eilatus' son
Was doomed mid the Mysian men to build a city, to bear
The name of the river thereby: but aback must Herakles fare
At Eurystheus' labours to toil. But he threatened in anger hot
To waste the Mysian land, if her folk for him found not
What doom upon Hylas had lighted, if dead or alive he were. 135
And pledges they gave for the lost, in that sons most noble and fair
Of their people they chose, and for hostages gave, and an oath
they swore
That they would not refrain from the toil of the search for evermore.
Wherefore for tidings of Hylas the Kians unto this day,
For Theiodamas' son, of the stranger inquire: the warders aye
Guard Trêchis the fair-built; for there did the hero cause to abide
The sons that they sent for their ransom to turn his fury aside.

And the wind all day bare onward the galley and all night
through
With a fresh strong blast: but when dawning arose, the breath of
it blew
No whit any more; and they spied jutting forth from a curve of 136
the land
A foreland, and broad to behold that dark height swelled from
the strand.
So they bent to the oars, and at sunrise the keel up-furrowed the sand.

THE SECOND BOOK

THERE were there steadings of cattle, and Amykus' farms were there,
Proud king of Bebrykian men, whom erst a wood-nymph bare;
For Bithynian Meliê couched with Poseidon the Lord of Birth.
Overweening was this their son above all the children of Earth,
Who even on wayfaring strangers his tyrannous ordinance laid
That they should not depart from his land till that trial of prowess were made
Against him with the fist: and neighbours full many he smote that they died.
And now to the galley he came; but he scorned in the height of his pride
To inquire of them wherefore they voyaged, or ask what men were they:
But with sudden defiance he challenged them all, and thus did he say: 10
'Sea-rovers, hearken the thing that is meet and right ye should know.
This is the ordinance—none may depart, from my country to go,
Even none who hath come to Bebrykia's folk out of alien lands,
Or ever against mine hands he hath lifted in battle his hands.
Choose for you therefore the mightiest man of all your array,
And set ye him here for the strife of the fist against me this day.
But and if ye shall shrink from the trial, and trample my laws underfoot,
Verily mighty constraint shall pursue you with bitter pursuit.'
So spake he in pride overweening, and came upon them as they heard

Fierce anger, but most by his threatening vaunt Polydeukes was 20
stirred.
Straightway he stood for his fellows' champion forth, and he cried:
'Peace!—threaten not us, whatsoever the name that hath
puffed thee with pride,
With brutal mishandling:—yea, unto these thy laws will we bow.
Even I right willingly offer me—lo, I will meet thee now.'
Roundly he spake; and with rolling eyes glared on him the king
As a lion javelin-smitten, when out on the mountains the ring
Of the hunters hemmeth him round; but, albeit encompassed about
By the throng, he heedeth them not, but his glance ever
searcheth him out,
Him only, which wounded him first, yet quelled him not with
the stroke.
Then Tyndareus' son laid by his goodly-woven cloak 30
Of delicate threads, a gift of remembrance for sweet days past
Of a daughter of Lemnos. His mantle's dark folds Amykus cast,
With the clasps thereof, to the ground, and the shepherd's staff
that he bore,
The rugged olive his hand from the windy hill-slope tore.
Then looked they, and chose for the combat a spot that was good
in their sight;
And all their companions they bade sit down to left and to right.
Then stood they forth, nor in form nor in stature alike to behold:
But the one might be seed of Typhôeus the fell, or a monster of old,
Ay, even as one of the giant brood of Earth, which she bare
To wreak upon Zeus her wrath: but Tyndareus' son showed fair 40
As the star of the heaven, whose loveliest beams through the
fading blue
Shine in the eventide, when the wings of the night drop dew.
Even such was the child of Zeus, and the soft down bloomed on
his chin,
And bright were his dancing eyes: but waxed his breast within
His fury and might like a wild beast's rage; and he struck out fast
With his hands, making trial if swift were their play, as in days
overpast,

Uncramped by the stress of toil and the strain of the weary oar.
But Amykus proved not his limbs, but he glared on his foe evermore
Standing in silence aloof, and he yearned in eager mood
To smite and bespatter the hero's breast with the spurting blood.
And between them Lykôreus, Amykus' henchman, cast on the ground
In front of their feet the fighting-gauntlets with thongs overbound,
Strips of the raw hide, dry, all ridged with wrinkles were they.
Then unto the hero the giant with arrogant words 'gan say:
'Whichsoever thou wilt, lo, freely and willingly grant I to thee,
Without casting of lots, that thou mayst not hereafter murmur at me.
Now bind them about thine hands: thou shalt learn, and to others shall tell
How featly I carve the tough bull-hides, how passing well
I wield them withal, to bedabble with blood the jaws of men.'
He spake, but the hero scorned with wrangling to answer again: 60
And he made no ado, but the pair lying nighest his feet, the same
Lightly smiling he took. Then unto him Kastor came,
And Talaus the mighty, the scion of Bias: they bound on his wrists
The gauntlets in haste, oft bidding him play the man in the lists.
And to Amykus Ornytus came and Arêtus; but naught knew they—
Fools!—that they girded a doomed man then for his latest fray.
So when they were ready, and forth in the lists stood face to face,
Straightway in front of their bodies their brawny hands did they raise.
Then closed they, and matched their might in the grim play furiously.
And now the Bebrykian king, as a charging wave of the sea 70
With storm-roughened crest overarcheth a ship, and would surely o'erwhelm,
But that scantly she 'scapeth by wisdom of him that swayeth the helm,
When over her bulwark to hurl itself mad is the surge of the wave;
So followed he hard upon Tyndareus' son to daunt him: he gave
No respite. The hero by cunning keeping him scatheless aye
Baffled his every rush: well marked he his brutal play,
To wot if the giant in might were haply resistless, or no.

So ever he faced him and warded, and flashed back blow for blow.
And even as when the shipwrights with hammers mightily swinging
Smite on the beams of a galley, driving the clamps close-clinging 80
Sharply together, that bang upon clang cometh crashing and ringing,
And the air is a-shiver ; so crack 'neath the buffets the cheeks of the twain,
So crash their jaws, and so clatter their teeth as the swift blows rain.
Nor flinch they nor falter, but facing each other smite they amain,
Till spent are they both, and for laboured panting they needs must refrain.
Then standing apart for a little they wiped from their foreheads away
The streaming sweat, while their deep chests heaved with the toil of the fray.
Then each against other again they rushed, as when on the lea
Two bulls for a heifer are fighting in fury of rivalry.
Then mid their battle did Amykus up to his full height spring 90
Like an ox-slayer straining a-tiptoe—downward the weight did he swing
Of his gauntleted hand on the hero ; but swerving swift from the stroke
By a turn of his head hath he foiled him, hath caught on his shoulder and broke
Its force,—he hath slipped past the knee of the giant his knee,—he hath rushed
With his whole weight dashing his fist 'neath his ear, and the bones hath he crushed,
That for agony down on his knees he sank, and the Minyans' shout
Rang ; and with one great gasp was the giant's life poured out.
Uprose the Bebrykian men to avenge the wild king's fall :
And full upon Polydeukes as one man rushed they all
With rugged clubs and with javelins tossing in furious hands. 100
But his comrades afront of him closed, and they drew their keen-whetted brands
Out of their scabbards : and Kastor the first with the sword-sweep cleft
The head of a foe, as against him he rushed ; and to right and to left

Upon either shoulder aslant did the ghastly halves of it fall.
Polydeukes o'erthrew the giant Itymoneus, Mimas withal;
For, weaponless, one with a sudden leap did he spurn on the breast
With his foot, and in dust he fell; and one, as to conflict he pressed,
Over the left brow smote he with swift right hand, and he tare
The eyelid away, that it left the wretch's eyeball bare.
And Oreides, Amykus' henchman, a brawny champion, 1
Stabbed with his lance at the flank of Talaus, Bias' son;
Howbeit he slew him not, but sliding along the skin
The brass sped under his belt, neither tasted the flesh within.
And Arêtus at Iphitus smote with a club of the knotted oak,
That Eurytus' scion, the battle-bider, reeled from the stroke.
Howbeit not yet was the hero doomed unto deadly bane;
Nay, soon was the smiter's self by Klytius' sword to be slain.
Then did Ankaius the dauntless son of Lykurgus in haste
Swing up his mighty axe, and around his left arm cast
The bear's dark fell for a shield, and amidst the Bebrykian array 120
In fury of onset he plunged, and beside him charged to the fray
Aiakus' sons, and Jason the valiant leapt to the fight.
And as when mid the folds the grey wolves scare in huddled affright
Vast throngs of sheep on a wintry day, having rushed on the pen
By the keen-nosed dogs unscented, unmarked of the shepherd's ken;
And in fury they seek to leap the fence, and to seize the prey,
Glaring and glaring, a fierce-eyed ring; and, shrinking away
Upon every side, on each other trample the sheep; even so
Drave they in ghastly rout the haughty Bebrykian foe.
And as when bee-keepers or shepherds fill with the stifling smoke 130
The cleft of a rock where dwell the honey-fashioning folk,
And the bees for a while all thronging within their cavern-home,
Murmur with muffled hum, till, driven at last therefrom
By the murky fume, they pour from the crag, and they flee away;
Even so not long they abode, but scattered in disarray
Through Bebrykia bearing the tidings of Amykus' doom did they fly.
Fools!—nothing they knew of another woe even then drawn nigh
All unforeseen, for their orchards were wasted in that same hour,

And amidst of their hamlets did Lykus' ravening spears devour,
And the Mariandynians slew, forasmuch as their king was afar, 140
For that aye for the iron-bearing land were the nations at war.
So now had the spoilers fallen on garth and byre and fold;
While seaward the heroes headed their sheep in throngs untold,
And this one to that one cried the while they drave the prey:
'Bethink ye, what price had they paid for their felon folly to-day,
If haply a God had but brought our Herakles hither to aid!
Ha! surely had he but been here, no trial, I ween, had been made
Of strife with the fists; but so soon as the caitiff drew nigh to proclaim
His ordinance, straightway the club should have made him forget the same,
Even as he spake it, yea, and forget the might of his hand. 150
Ah, but we left him, we left him, alone on a desolate strand,
And we sailed away oversea:—full soon shall we know, each one,
Our baneful folly, seeing our mightiest champion is gone!'
But the counsels of Zeus had wrought all this, beyond their ken.
So here through the night they abode, and the hurts of the wounded men
They tended, and slew to the Gods everlasting the sacrifice;
And a mighty supper they dight: fell sleep upon no man's eyes,
By the bowl as they sat and the blazing altar the long night through,
With their golden locks enwreathed with the leaves of a bay that grew
Hard by the strand, about whose stem was their hawser bound. 160
And to Orpheus' lyre they chanted; their voices' blended sound
Rang tunefully: all the breathless beach lay tranced with the spell
Of the song; for of Zeus of Therapnae's child did the sweet hymn tell.
Over the dusky hills did the light of the new sun leap,
As he rose from his far sea-bourn, as he roused the shepherds from sleep.
Then from the stem of the bay did the heroes their hawser uncoil,
And they laid in the galley so much as sufficed for their need of the spoil;
And before the breeze up swirling Bosporus' flood they steered.

There steep and high the surge, as a mountain's crown upreared
Afront of the prow, rusheth on them as leapeth a beast on the prey,— 170
Higher, still higher upheaved to the clouds : thou wouldst verily say,
'They cannot escape grim doom, for that full o'er the galley's side
Swingeth its madding crest like a cloud!' Yet a bark may ride
Safe even o'er such, if she have but a helmsman good at need.
And by Tiphys' steering-craft even so did the heroes speed
Through the peril unscathed, yet sore dismayed. So the wild day passed,
And the night; and with dawn on Bithynia's shore the anchor they cast.

There hard by the sea had Phineus Agênor's son his abode,
Who endured above all men trouble and anguish, a baleful load.
For a spirit of prophecy Lêto's son had bestowed of old 180
On him; yet he thrust all reverence aside, and to mortals foretold
The sacred purpose of Zeus, the mind of Heaven's King.
Therefore did Zeus requite him with eld long-lingering;
And he took from his eyes the pleasant light, and he suffered him not
To have joy of the meats untold which the dwellers around aye brought,
What time to his halls they resorted the purpose of heaven to hear.
But out of their caverns of cloud ever suddenly swooping anear
The Harpies would snatch them away from his lips and his hands evermore
With their talons, and whiles was there left unto him of all that store
No whit, and whiles but a crumb, that for torment his life might 190 be spared.
And they poured over all a loathly stench : was none that dared,
I say not, to carry thereof to his mouth, but even to stand
Far off, so foully the remnants reeked of the banquet banned.
But now, on his ears as their voices and tramp of their coming brake,
He knew that the men were at hand whereof Zeus' oracle spake
That their coming should bring for him respite, in peace to eat his bread.

And he rose from his couch, as a shadowy dream might rise
from a bed,
Bowed over his staff, and with wrinkled feet 'gan creep to the door
Groping along the walls; and for helplessness trembled sore
And for age his limbs as he moved, and with filth was his 200
parchèd skin
All leprous, and nought save this enwrapped the bones within.
So forth of the hall he came, and he bowed on the threshold-stone
His weary knees; and a swoon, like a dark pall over him thrown,
Enshrouded him; under his feet him seemed that the earth reeled
round;
And he lay in a strengthless trance, and his lips could frame no sound.
And the heroes beheld him, and round about in a throng they pressed
And marvelled; until at the last the man from the depth of his breast
Drew laboured and difficult breath, and uttered his prophecy:
'Hearken, ye noblest of Hellas' sons, if ye verily be
The self-same heroes that Jason leadeth forth on the Quest 210
Of the Golden Fleece in Argo the ship at a King's grim hest.
Of a surety ye be: my soul hath knowledge of everything
By her divination yet. Thanks therefore to thee, O King,
O Son of Lêto, I render from depths of affliction and woe!
O friends, by the Suppliants' Zeus, who is ever the sternest foe
Of transgressors—for Phœbus' sake, and in awful Hêrê's name
I beseech—by the Gods I implore you in whose care hither ye came,
Help me: deliver from anguish a most ill-fated man,
Neither hasten away uncaring and leave me in bale and ban,
As ye find me: for not on mine eyes alone hath the fierce foot trode 220
Of the Vengeance-fiend, and I drag to the end eld's weary load;
But a curse more bitter than all still hangeth over mine head,
For the Harpies are wont evermore to snatch from my lips my bread,
Swooping adown from a den of destruction, a viewless lair.
Neither find I any device for mine help: nay, easier it were
To escape the ken of mine own heart's thoughts when I crave to
be fed,
Than theirs; so swift through the welkin on hovering wings are
they sped.

But if haply ever they leave but a morsel of meat on my board,
It reeketh with most unendurable strength of a stench abhorred.
No man, no, not for an instant, might dare draw nigh to the same, 230
Not though in his breast were a heart forged all of adamant frame.
But me of a surety doth hard compelling of hunger constrain
To abide, and abiding to stay this famine's gnawing pain.
But those my tormentors, an oracle saith, shall be made to flee
By Boreas' sons; neither strangers shall my deliverers be,
If indeed I be Phineus, renowned among men in the days long gone
For my wealth and my soothsaying lore, if Agênor called me son,
If the sister of these, Kleopatra, when over the Thracians I reigned,
Came to mine halls, a bride by a royal bride-price gained.'
So ended Agênor's son, and compassion's o'ermastering pain 240
Thrilled all the heroes, but chiefly the North-wind's scions twain.
Brushing the tears from their eyes they drew nigh him, and Zethes spake;
And the hand of the grief-worn sire in his hand with the word did he take:
'O hapless, none other is more afflicted than thou, I trow,
Among men!—ah, wherefore on thee is there heaped such a burden of woe?
Baleful in sooth was the folly wherewith through thy prophecy-lore
Against Gods thou transgressedst: for this was their anger exceeding sore.
Howbeit our spirit within us, although we be fain, is afraid
To help thee, if on us indeed a God this honour hath laid.
For to dwellers on Earth the rebukes of Immortals be plain to discern; 250
And we dare not chase yon Harpies from thee, howsoever we yearn
For thine help, in the hour of their coming, except thou swear to us first
That for this we shall lose not the high Gods' favour, as men accurst.'
So spake he: the stricken in years uplifted and opened wide
His sightless eyes straightway, and with swift words Phineus replied:
'Hush!—thrust not such thoughts, my son, on a spirit affliction-filled!
Be witness Latona's son, who taught to me gracious-willed

Prophecy-lore; and be witness this mine ill-starred doom,
And this dark cloud on mine eyes, and the Gods of the Underworld Gloom,—
May their curse, if I die with a lie on my tongue, be upon me for aye!— 260
That on you no wrath of the Gods shall descend for your help this day.'
Then by the oath were they kindled to help him, and fled their fears.
And the young men straightway made ready the meat for the stricken in years,—
The last ordained for the Harpies' spoil,—and anigh to him stood
Those twain, to smite with the sword those fiends when they swooped on the food.
Then first his hands on the meats did he lay, that grey-haired sire:—
But sudden as bitter blasts, or as flashes of levin-fire,
Unawares from the clouds they had darted, and swooping adown they yelled
Their awful scream, fierce-eager for prey; but the heroes beheld,
And shouted amidst of their onrush. The fiends at the challenge of war 270
Swift ravined the meats from the boards, and over the sea afar
Soared they away, but there did their foul sick stench remain.
Then straightway hard on their track did the North-wind's scions twain
Uplifting their swords follow after them fast, for with tireless might
Zeus filled them: howbeit they had not prevailed to follow their flight
But with Zeus's help, for that faster than Zephyrus' blasts they darted
Evermore, when on Phineus they swooped, and whene'er from the wretch they departed.
And as when on the mountain-ridges keen hounds cunning in chase
On the track of the hornèd goats or the deer hard-following race
Swiftly, and ever a little behind the prey as they strain, 280
Snap at the haunch of the quarry, and clash their teeth in vain;

So Zetes and Kala'ïs rushed ever nearer with eager grip,
Clutched at them, smote at them, missed but by sword-point or finger-tip.
Yea, even despite Heaven's will had they rent them limb from limb,
Overtaking them far away where the Floating Islands swim,—
But Iris the Storm-foot beheld them, and downward she plunged from the sky
Through a whirlwind of air, and with words of restraining aloud did she cry:
'Sons of the North-wind, forefended it is that ye smite with the sword
The Harpies, great Zeus's hounds; but myself will pronounce the word
Of the oath that shall hold them from lighting again on the ancient's board.' 290
Then spake she the words of the Oath of the Styx, the oath most dread
Unto all the Gods, whose reverence guardeth the words once said,
That the Harpies should never thereafter draw nigh unto Phineus' hall,
To the home of Agênor's son, for so was it doomed to befall.
To the oath then yielded the heroes, and backward they turned their flight
Unto the ship; and the Strophads, the Isles of Return, were they hight
Therefrom, which of old the Floating Isles had been called of men.
And the Harpies and Iris parted, and into their cavern-den
In Krêtê, the land of Minos, they plunged: but Olympus-ward
Uplifted 'twixt heaven and earth on her swift wings Iris soared. 300
But the heroes bathed and anointed the skin all fouled and sere
Of the ancient the while; and the choice of the fatlings they slew for their cheer,
Of the flock which they bare away of the spoil of Amykus dead.
So when in the halls a plenteous eventide-feast they had spread,
They feasted; and Phineus amidst them was like unto them that dream,

As from ravenous hunger he cheered his heart, so strange did it seem.
So there, when with meats and with wine they had satisfied all their need,
Through the long night kept they vigil, and waited for Boreas' seed.
And the ancient sat in their midst in the ruddy glow of the fire;
And he told of their voyaging's bourn, and the end of their desire: 310
'Give ear unto me:—forefended it is that ye hear all through
Your fate:—whatsoe'er seemeth good to the Gods I will hide not from you.
Mad was I of yore, when I spake unto Earth's sons Zeus's will
In all points unto the end: for this is his pleasure still
To reveal unto men his oracles short of the fulness of doom,
That so they may lean on the Gods, and faith and prayer have room.
The Rocks Kyanean first, when that gotten ye are from me,
In the place where the two seas meet, the Dark Blue Crags, shall ye see.
Through that dread pass no pilot, I ween, hath prevailed to go;
For rooted they are not to earth on foundations of rock therebelow; 320
But with rush and recoil unceasingly each against other they clash:
High over them archeth the crested brine, and the foam-feathers flash
From the seething cauldron: the precipice-foreland thundereth aye.
Wherefore to this my counsel give good heed, and obey,
If indeed with prudent soul and with fear of the Gods on high
Ye essay this Quest, that by doom self-sought ye may not die
As the fool, nor in rashness of youth essay to rush thereby.
First with a bird, with a white-winged dove, shall ye make assay,
Speeding her flight from the ship's prow. If she shall win her way
Safe 'twixt the Crags of Terror, and out to the open sea, 330
No longer thereafter from daring the selfsame path shrink ye;
But grip ye the oars in your hands, and put forth your uttermost might
Cleaving the gorge of the sea, for that safety's deliverance-light
Shall not be in prayer so much as the strength of your hands and the strain.

Wherefore let all else be, and toil ye with might and main
Boldly: but ere then pray as ye list; I say not nay.
But and if the death-trap clutch in the midst the dove, and slay,
Then sail ye aback; for better by far it is that ye
Should yield to the Deathless. The evil fate should ye nowise flee
Of the Rocks—no, not though fashioned of iron your Argo should be.
O wretches, dare not to transgress the warning my tongue hath given,
Though thrice so much ye account me abhorred of the Dwellers in Heaven—
Yea, though it were more than thrice—as I am by my grievous sin,
Yet dare not to flout the omen, to thrust your galley therein!
And these things shall fall as they haply shall fall. But if scatheless ye shun
The rush of the Clashing Rocks, and the Pontus Sea shall be won,
Sailing therefrom, the Bithynians' land to your right shall ye keep,
Ever heedfully standing out from the reefs, until ye shall sweep
Round the outfall of swift-flowing Rheba, and round the headland dark,
And within the haven of Thynê's isle shall anchor your bark.
Thence turn ye aback for a little space o'er the long sea-swell,
Till ye beach your keel on the strand where the Mariandynians dwell.
Thereby is a path through darkness descending to Hades' hall,
And the Cape Acherusian towereth upward, a giant wall.
And swirling Acheron cleaving the mountain's heart unseen
Suddenly poureth forth his flood from a mighty ravine.
Thereby many column-hills of the Paphlagonian shore
Shall ye pass, the nation whose king was in Enetê born of yore,
Even Pelops; and yet do they boast them sprung from his princely line.
And a headland there is, looking full where the circling Bear doth shine,
A crag exceeding steep, and Karambis it hath to name.
The blasts of the North-wind are sundered about the crest of the same,
So sheer doth it spring from the sea, so sharply it cleaveth the air.
Now when ye have rounded the same, lo, stretcheth before you there

A great beach : far at the end of the gleaming strand's long sweep
'Neath a jutting foreland the waters of Halys seaward leap
Terribly roaring ; and hard thereby doth Iris go,
A lesser river, whose swirls soft-rippling gently flow.
And onward from thence is the bend of a huge cape towering high
Up from the land, and the mouth of the river Thermodon thereby, 370
Where the height Themiskyrian watcheth the sleeping bay at its side,
Cometh murmuring still of her journeyings over the mainland wide.
There is the plain of Doias, the cities three rise near
Of the Amazon Maids : then they whose lot is of all most drear,
The Chalybes, dwell in a rugged land on a stubborn soil,
Smithying-craftsmen ; in forging of iron ever they toil.
And anigh to them dwell Tibarenians, lords of many sheep,
Past Zeus the Defender of Strangers, the fane upon Genetê's steep.
And next unto these, on their marches, the Mossynœcians dwell
In a land of forests, in many a mountain-cradled dell, 380
Whose homes be in towers of timber, fashioned and carven well.
But coast past these, and beach your keel on a smooth isle : there
Beat back with your uttermost cunning the ravening scourge of the air,
Those birds, which in countless multitudes haunt, men say, the strand
Of the desolate isle ;—therein doth a temple of Arês stand
Of stone, which was built by the queens of the Amazon war-array,
Otrêrê and Antiopê, what time they marched to the fray ;—
For there shall a help for your need from the bitter sea arise
Unlooked-for : wherefore, abide there, with kindly intent I advise.
But now what do I, transgressing again ?—what need that I 390
Should tell to you every whit of the tale of my prophecy ?
Onward away from the isle, on the mainland shore's far side,
The Philyrans dwell, and beyond the Philyran folk abide
The Makrônes, and next, the Becheirian tribes, a host untold.
Next after these the Sapeirians' land shall your eyes behold.
Next these the Bezyrans, their neighbours, dwell ; and beyond, at last,
Even the warrior Kolchians : yet shall ye speed on past
Your galley, till stayed at the uttermost bourn of the sea ye are.
There over the mainland Kytaian, from Amaranth mountains afar,
And over the plain Kirkaian rolling evermore,

His broad flood into the sea doth eddying Phasis pour.
Into the selfsame river's mouth your galley bring:
Then on the towers shall ye look of Kytaian Aiêtes the king,
And the War-god's grove dim-shadowed. And high on a dark oak-tree
Hangeth the Fleece; and a dragon, a monster fearful to see,
Ever glareth around, keeping watch and ward: never dawn doth arise,
Neither darkness descendeth, when sweet sleep quelleth his ruthless eyes.'
Even so did he speak: straightway as they heard were they thrilled with fear.
Long speechless they sat, till brake at the last that silence drear
Aison's son, sore wildered that boding of evil to hear: 410
'O ancient, now hast thou come to the bourn of the toils we must know
On the sea, and hast told us the token, by trust wherein we may go
Through the baleful rocks, and win unto Pontus: but if once more,
If through these we escape, we shall homeward return unto Hellas' shore,
Exceeding fain were I this also to learn of thee.
How shall I do?—how track such a measureless path o'er the sea,
Who am but a youth, and with youths?—and behold, this Kolchian land
At the ends of the earth doth lie, on the great sea's uttermost strand.'
So did he cry; but answered the ancient, and spake yet again:
'My son, when once thou hast safely fled through the Rocks of 420
Bane,
Fear not, for a God shall show thee another voyaging-track
From Aia: yea, after Aia guides shalt thou nowise lack.
But, friends, of the guileful aid of the Cyprian Queen take thought;
For of her unto glorious issues shall all your toils be wrought.
And now of the things yet lying beyond these ask me nought.'
So answered Agênor's son; and lo, those twain stood nigh,
The sons of the Thracian North-wind, swooping adown from the sky.

On the threshold their swift feet set they; and straight from his carven chair
Each hero upsprang, beholding the champions suddenly there.
Eager for tidings were they; and Zetes, still as he drew 430
Hard breath from the toil of the hunting, told them how far they flew
Chasing them, told how Iris restrained them at point to slay;
Of the oaths which the Goddess gave of her grace; how in sore dismay
'Neath Dictê's cliff in a cavern vast they had plunged out of sight.
Then were the heroes all in the mansion filled with delight
For the tidings, and Phineus withal. Then spake unto him straightway
Aison's son, and with love overflowing his soul 'gan say:—
'Of a surety a God, O Phineus, there was, in compassion that bent
To look on thy grievous affliction, and us from afar he sent
Hither, that Boreas' sons might drive thy tormentors from thee. 440
Now if he would give but light to thine eyes, such gladness in me
Would stir, as though with the Fleece I were come to mine home, I trow.'
He spake, but the head of the ancient sank, and he answered low:
'Nay, Aison's son, it is past recall: no dawn shall arise
Balm-breathing on them, for blasted are these my sightless eyes.
Nay, death let a God bestow right speedily, rather than this:
Then, when I am dead, shall I enter at last into perfect bliss.'
So spake they, and each unto other the answering speech returned.
And amidst of their converse in no long space the dawn-flush burned
Of the Child of the Mist: then gathered the neighbours to 450 Phineus' door
Which in time past day by day wont thither to come evermore;
And, despite the curse, from their own a portion of meat each brought.
And to all did the ancient—yea, to the poor whose hands bare nought—

Speak kindly his oracles; yea, from afflictions many he freed
By his soothsaying: wherefore they came, and they ministered unto his need.
And came with the rest Paraibius, he that was dearest of all
Unto him, and with joy was he ware of the presences thronging the hall.
For the ancient to him long since had foretold that a chieftain-band,
Unto Aiêtes' city faring from Hellas-land,
On the beach of the Thynian coast should make their hawsers fast, 460
And by these should the Harpies of Zeus be restrained from tormenting at last.
So with words of wisdom and love the ancient gladdened each heart
Ere he let them go; but Paraibius suffered he not to depart,
But bade him abide with the chieftains, and sent him, making request
Of his friend to go to the flock, and to bring the goodliest
Of the sheep unto him. So when to perform his behest he had sped,
To the chieftains gathered there spake Phineus, and lovingly said:
'O friends, not every man is overweening of mood,
Neither forgetful of kindness; so loyal of heart and so good
Is yon man. Hither he came on a day to inquire of his fate: 470
For, when never so hard he toiled, sore labouring early and late,
Yet ever his need grew greater, his poverty waxed alway,
With leanness wasting his frame: day followed on evil day
Yet worse: no respite there was to his weariful pain. But herein
Was this man paying the debt of his father's ancient sin.
For once on the mountains alone the trees of the forest felling
He had set at nought the prayers of a Nymph in an oak-tree dwelling.
For with earnest entreaty she moaned her request, and besought him with tears
To spare that trunk which had grown with her growth, wherewith through the years
Of long generations her life was bound; but in folly and pride 480
Of his youthful arrogance hewed he on: and the Tree-nymph died.
Wherefore the Wood-maid caused that her death thereafter should be
For a curse unto him and his children. And I, when he came unto me,

Knew of the ancient sin; and an altar I bade him raise
To the Thynian Nymph, and atonement-victims to give to the blaze,
Praying to 'scape from the weird pronounced on his father of yore.
Then, when from the doom of the Goddess deliverance came, never more
Forgat he me, nor neglected: and sorely against his will
From my doors do I send him fain to attend mine afflictions still.'
So spake Agenor's son; and straightway returned again 490
His friend with fatlings twain from the flock. Rose Jason then
And rose the North-wind's sons at the ancient prophet's word.
Eftsoons called they on the name of Apollo the Prophecy-lord;
Then slew they the sheep on the hearth as sloped the sun to the west.
And the younger men of their band made ready the plenteous feast.
So when they had eaten, they turned to their rest, as each man chose,
By the hawsers of Argo these, through the mansion in clusters those.
But at dawn the Etesian breezes blew, which o'er every land
Equally blow in their season by Zeus's high command.
Kyrênê, 'tis told, in the meads where Peneios' waters roll 500
Pastured her sheep in the olden days; for dear to her soul
Were her maidenhood and her couch unstained: but, even as she strayed
By the stream with her flock, did Apollo snatch from the earth the maid
From Haimonia afar, and mid Chthonian Nymphs did he set her down,
Where over their Libyan haunts the steeps Myrtosian frown.
There did she bear Aristaius, and Phœbus' son did they call
In Haimonia the Shepherd Lord, and the Mighty Hunter withal;
For the God of his love to a Nymph transformed her, and made her there
The Lady of the Land, long-lived: but his child he bare,
A babbling infant yet, to be nurtured in Cheiron's cave. 510
And to him, when he grew unto manhood, a bride the Muses gave;
And cunning in healing they taught him, with prophecy-wisdom they fed;

And their tender of sheep did they make him, that all their flocks
he led,
In the plain Athamantian of Phthia that pastured, by Othrys' side,
And where the sacred streams of the river Apidanus glide.
But when Sirius glared on the isles of Minos with scorching blaze,
Neither came to the dwellers therein any respite for many days,
For this Aristaius they sent, by the Archer-god's command,
To avert the plague; and he left at his father's behest the land
Of Phthia, and dwelt in Kos, and assembled thither the folk 520
Of Parrhasia, even the people sprung from Lykaon's stock.
So to Rain-giver Zeus he builded a mighty altar there,
And he offered sacrifice meet to the star of the fiery glare
On the hills, and to Zeus himself the son of Kronos; and so
O'er the earth from Zeus the cool Etesian winds yet blow
For forty days: and, or ever the red Dog-star doth rise,
The priests in Kos unto this day offer him sacrifice.

So telleth the tale: and there were the heroes constrained to stay
Land-bound by the selfsame winds. But the Thynians day by day,
Of their love for Phineus, brought to them gifts of abundant cheer. 530
And thereafter unto the Blessèd Twelve did the wanderers rear
On the further strand an altar, and victims offered they there
Ere they entered the sea-swift galley to row: yet forgat not to bear
In Argo a trembling dove, but Euphêmus clutched her fast
In his hand, as with terror she shrank and cowered; and so at the last
Loose from the Thynian land the hawsers twain they cast.

Yet not unmarked of Athênê onward again did they fare:
Swiftly her feet hath she set on a cloud light-floating in air
Which should waft her along, for she caused that the weight
divine it bore.
So seaward she swept to the help of the toilers at the oar. 540
And as when one roveth afar from his own land,—oftentimes thus
We men in our hardihood wander, and no land seemeth to us
Too far away, but all paths lie within our ken,—
And he thinketh upon his home, and all in a moment then
Him seemeth the track over sea and o'er land thereunto lieth plain,
And the eyes of his soul in his eager pondering thitherward strain;

Even so swiftly the Daughter of Zeus through the welkin hath sped,
Till her feet on the perilous strand of the coast Bithynian tread.
So when they were come to the narrow gorge of the winding strait
Where to right and to left stern cliffs pent in that grim sea-gate, 550
Then the swirling rush of the surf dashed, bursting up from below,
O'er the ship as she went, and onward in sore dismay did they row.
And now the thud of the rocks, as each against other they clashed,
Ceaselessly smote on their ears, and thundered the cliffs brine-lashed.
Even then Euphêmus uprose firm-grasping the dove in his hand,
And on to the prow he strode, and the oarsmen obeyed the command
Of Tiphys Hagnias' son, that they rowed with might and main
To drive the Argo betwixt the rocks through the perilous lane,
Putting their trust in their strength; and the crags, as asunder they leapt,
Opening they saw—of all men last—round a bend as they swept. 560
And their spirit was melted within them:—but now Euphêmus hath sped
The flight of the wings of the dove: each man uplifted his head,
Watching what now should befall:—on, onward between them, on
Flew she; but face to face those charging walls of stone
Came rushing together, and crashed, and the seething brine uproared
Vast-volumed like to a cloud; and the madding sea-gulf roared
With an awful voice, and thundered the welkin wide all round.
And out of the caverns under the rugged cliffs the sound
Of a hollow rumbling came, as the sea surged inward; and high
O'er the cliffs from the dashing waves did the spurts of the white foam fly. 570
The ship broached-to in the wave-rush: shorn by the rocks was the tip
Of the dove's tail-feathers; but onward she flew, by the death-gin's grip
Unscathed. Loud shouted the oarsmen; and Tiphys cried to them then
To row with their might, for the crags were parting asunder again.
But for trembling they faltered in rowing, until the indraught caught
The ship in the strength of its sweep back-swinging; and lo, they were brought

Betwixt those rocks. Then fell upon all most ghastly dread,
For destruction that none could escape was hanging above each head.
Even now through the gap wide Pontus to right and to left was beheld:
But all unawares at their bows a mighty surge upswelled 5
Overbowed like a precipice-frown; and they saw as the green arch gleamed,
And with cowering heads did they shut their eyes—to their souls it seemed
That down on the ship's whole length it would leap, and overwhelm;
But, while yet to the rowing she laboured, did Tiphys' touch on the helm
Ease her, and under the keel hath it rolled, as leapt the prow:
High hath it lifted the stern, and afar hath it swept her now
From the rocks, and the galley 'twixt earth and heaven was tossed on high.
But Euphêmus strode down the line of the rowers with cheering cry
To bend to the oars with their uttermost might: and they tore through the deep
The blades with a shout. And far as a ship to the stroke will leap, 5
Even twice so far leapt Argo away, and the tough oars bent
Like bended bows, such might to the stroke the heroes lent.
On-rushing, up-towering, a breaker came, overarched like a cave;
But suddenly light as a roller she rode the furious wave.
Forward through yawning gulfs she plunged; but caught was her prow
By a whirlpool sea-rush betwixt the Clashers:—on each side now
Swaying forward they thundered, and shivered the hull to the coming shock.
Then did Athênê backward thrust one massy rock
With her left hand, touching their bark with her right to speed her through;
On, like a wingèd arrow 'twixt billow and air she flew. 6
Yet shorn away was the tip of the galley's arching stern
By the rocks in their clash never-resting. Then did Athênê return
Far up to Olympus soaring, when now their peril was past.
But the Crags in the selfsame place that moment were rooted fast

Each hard against other for ever, as fated they were to remain
By the Blest, when a man in his ship should have passed there-
through unslain.
And now for the first from dismay blood-curdling did those
breathe free,
Now gazing around on the sky, now o'er the expanse of sea
Far stretching away; for they weened that from Hades safe they
had fled.
Then first of them Tiphys brake that awe-struck hush, and he said: 610
'Now I deem we have 'scaped it, we and the Argo, in very deed:
And herein none other, save only Athênê, hath helped us at need,
Who breathed into Argo spirit divine, when Argus the wright
Knit her with bolts, that she could not be trapped in doom's despite.
O Aison's son, for the hest of thy king no more fear thou,
Since a God hath vouchsafed unto us to flee all scatheless now
Through yonder rocks: yea, all thy toils which are yet to be done
Shall lightly be compassed, as Phineus foretold, Agênor's son.'
So spake he; and forward past the Bithynian land he sped
The ship right on through the midst of the sea. But Jason said— 620
And sad was his voice and low as he answered the hero-chief:—
'Ah, Tiphys, to what end thus wouldst thou hearten me in
my grief?
I have sinned: with baneful and cureless madness have I transgressed.
For I ought, in the very hour when Pelias uttered his hest,
To have straightway refused this Quest, yea, though I were
doomed to die
By the hands of tormentors, limb from limb hewn pitilessly.
But exceeding dread and cares unendurable now be mine,
With haunting fear as I sail the sea's chill paths of brine
In the ship, and with haunting fear wheresoever we set our feet
On the land, for that foes evermore on every shore do we meet. 630
And ever, when past is the day, through a night of sighs I wake,
Even from the hour when first ye gathered for Jason's sake,
For all things aye taking thought. With a light heart cheerily
Thou speak'st, who for nought but thine own life needest to
care; but I

For mine own care never a jot; but for this man and that man's bane,
And for thee, and for other my comrades I bear this burden of pain,
Lest haply never I bring you alive unto Hellas again.'
  So spake he, trying the heroes' souls; but with words of cheer
Shouted they: glowed his heart that gallant chiding to hear.
And again he uplifted his voice, and he hailed that hero-crew: 640
  'O friends, your manful spirit hath quickened my courage anew.
Wherefore, not though through abysses of Hades my way should be,
Will I suffer that dread shall lay hold on my soul, so steadfast do ye
Abide amid heart-wringing terror—yea, seeing that now through the strait
Of the Clashing Rocks we have sailed, I trow there lieth in wait
No terror hereafter like unto this, if in truth we obey
The counsel of Phineus the seer, as we track the printless way.'
  So spake he; from words of misgiving their lips thenceforth they refrained:
But they fell to the ceaseless labour of rowing; and quickly they gained
Rheba the swift-flowing river: Kotône's height they descried, 650
And shortly thereafter past the Headland Dark did they glide.
Thereby was Phyllêis' outfall, where in the days bygone
In the halls of his palace Dipsakus welcomed Athamas' son,
What time from Orchomenus-city he fled, on the winged ram borne.
A Nymph of the Mead was his mother: the tyrant's arrogant scorn
He loathed, but contented beside his father's streams dwelt he
With his mother, and pastured his sheep in the meadows beside the sea.
And quickly they sighted his shrine, and the broad low banks of the stream,
And the plain, and of Kalpê's deep-flowing waters they caught the gleam
For a moment, and passed it by, and still, when the daylight waned, 660
'Neath the stars of the windless night at the tireless oars they strained.
And even as ploughing oxen cleaving the rain-soaked soil
Labour the furrows adown, and abundant sweat of their toil
Streameth from flank and from neck, and aye from beneath the yoke

Are the tired beasts turning their eyes askance; and as furnace-smoke
In hot gasps snort they the breath from their mouths; and, deep in the clay
Thrusting their hoofs, at the plough they tug through the live-long day;
So toiled those heroes tugging the oars through the brine alway.
When the dawn divine not yet hath arisen, nor utter night
Reigneth, but over the darkness stealeth a faint grey light,— 670
The twilight-tide is it named of slumber-stinted men,—
Into a desolate Thynian island's haven then
They ran, and with weary toil sore-spent won they to the strand.
And to them lo, Lêto's son, coming up from the Libyan land,
As he fared to the countless folk of the Hyperborean race,
Appeared; and his tresses golden-gleaming about his face,
Ever, as onward he moved, in the breezes floated and swung.
In his left hand held he the silver bow, and his quiver slung
From his shoulders was gleaming adown his back: and the isle all o'er
Quaked 'neath his feet, and surged the billow high on the shore. 680
Then fell on them 'wildered fear as they looked: was none dared turn
His face to gaze with his eyes on the God's eyes lovely and stern.
But with heads bowed down to the earth they stood: and onward he passed
Faring afar through the air to the sea. Then Orpheus at last
After long hush spake, and he cried to the hero-chieftains all:
'Come now, an ye will, this island the Sacred Isle let us call
Of Apollo the Dawn-god, seeing at dawning revealed to our eyes
O'er the isle he hath passed. Such things as we have let us sacrifice,
On the shore upbuilding an altar: and if in the days to come
To Haimonia-land he vouchsafe us return, safe-speeding us home, 690
Then with the thighs of hornèd goats will we pay our vow.
But with sacrifice-steam and libation I bid you propitiate now
The God. Be gracious, O King manifested!—be gracious thou!'
So did he counsel: an altar with speed 'gan these uppile
Of shingle, and those through the island wandered, seeking the while

If they haply might light on a fawn, or the wild goat's rest
brood
That in multitudes seek their pasturage far in the depths of the wood.
And Lêto's son unto these gave booty; and carving out
The thighs, on the altar they laid them with fat-folds wrapped about:
And they burnt them, hailing Apollo the Lord of the Fair Dayspring.
And around the blaze they stood in a wide encompassing ring:
'All hail, fair Healer Apollo! Hail, thou Healer of Bane!'
They sang: and amidst them Oeagrius' goodly son hath ta'en
The Bistonian lyre, and uplifted his voice in the clear-ringing lay,
Singing how on the rocky flanks of Parnassus once on a day
Delphinê the monster the young God slew with his arrow-flight,
When he yet was a beardless youth, rejoicing in locks of light:—
'Be gracious!' he sang, 'Unshorn, O King, be thy tresses aye,
Ever unravaged, as Heaven's will is! One only may lay
Love-lingering hands thereupon, even Lêto Kôeus' child.' 710
And the daughters of Pleistus oft, the Korykian Nymphs of the wild,
Caught up the refrain—'Hail, Healer!' their gladdening echoes
ring.
So born was the lovely hymn that to Phœbus yet men sing.
Then, when with the dance and the song they had honoured
the God, they swore,
By the holy libations taking the oath, that evermore
They would stand each one by his fellow, and help in unity.
On the victims laid they their hands as they spake; and yet may
ye see
A temple to gracious Unity there, which their own hands reared
In the day that they took for their wayfaring-fellow the God-
dess revered.
And now when the dawn of the third day came, a fresh strong 720
wind
From the west upsprang, and they left the island-cliffs behind.
Overagainst the mouth of the river Sangarius then,
And the land exceeding rich of the Mariandynian men,
The streams of Lykus, the mere of Anthemoïsia—these
They sighted, and ran thereby, and ever the sheets in the breeze

Quivered, and all the tackling, as onward they sped their flig
But at dawn—forasmuch as the wind had fallen asleep in the nigh
Gladly the haven they won of the Acherusian Head.
Upward it soareth to heaven with cliffs no foot may tread,
Fronting the sea Bithynian; below it the craggy rocks
Ever lashed by the brine stand rooted: around them with thunde
shocks
Ever crashes the wallowing surge; and above the turmoil on hig
Wide-spreading planes on the brow of the mountain rest on the sky
And aback of the headland, and sloped therefrom away from the shore
Is a glen in a hollow: therein is a cave, even Hades' Door,
With forest and rocks overroofed, and thereout an icy breath,
Chill-blowing unceasingly up from unfathomed abysses of death,
Freezeth the dews evermore, neither melteth the glistering rime
From the leaves, till the hour when the sun to his noonday height
doth climb.
And o'er that headland grim doth silence never brood,
But it murmureth ever with sound confused of the booming flood
And of leaves that shiver in blasts from the mountain-clefts that blow.
There also the outfall is of the river Acheron's flow:
Through the heart of the headland bursting it hurleth its flood to
the sea
Eastward, through yawning chasms plunging suddenly.
But 'Saviour of Sailors' in days thereafter called they its name,
Even Megaran folk of Nisaia, when seeking a home they came
In the Mariandynian land; for deliverance from peril it gave
Unto them and their ships from the stress of stormy wind and wave.
Through the gorge of the cape Acherusian ran the heroes their prow,
And seaward-facing abode; for the wind had lulled but now.
Nor long unmarked of Lykus, the lord of the selfsame land,
And the Mariandynian folk, they came, that hero-band,
The slayers of Amykus, seeing their rumour before them had run:
So a league with the wanderers made they because of the great
deed done.
And, for Prince Polydeukes, they hailed him as though of the
Gods he were,

Thither flocking from every side ; for through many a stormy year
Had they warred with the proud Bebrykians, and faced the battle-blast.
So they went up into the city, and all together they passed
Into Lykus' palace, and that day through by the meat and the bowl 760
In all lovingkindness they sat, and with converse gladdened their soul.
And Aison's scion his lineage told, and the names of the rest
Of the hero-helpers withal, and the tale of Pelias' hest ;
And how the women of Lemnos in kindness dealt with them well ;
And of all that in Kyzikus, land of the Dolian men, befell ;
How to Mysia they came, and to Kios, where Herakles lion-souled
Sore loth they forsook ; and the words of the Sea-god Glaukus he told ;
And how they laid the Bebrykian people and Amykus low ;
And of Phineus' prophecies told he and all his weary woe ;
And how they escaped through the Crags Dark-blue, and beheld 770 on the isle
Lêto's son : and still, as he told all, Lykus the while
Hearkened in gladness of soul ; but with grief did the heart of him ache
For Herakles left behind, and unto them all he spake :
'O friends, what a hero's help ye have lost for the way ye must go
Far-sailing to halls of Aiêtes!—myself have beheld him, and know
What manner of man he was ; for in Daskylus' halls did he stand,
Even here in the halls of my sire, when he marched through the Asian land
Afoot, that belt of the battle-revelling queen to win,
Hippolytê : then did he find me with youth's soft down on my chin.
Here, when Priolaus my brother was unto his grave-mound borne,— 780
Who was slain by our Mysian foes, and for whom the people mourn
With exceeding piteous dirges from that day forth,—in the lists
Against Titias the strong he stood, and prevailed in the strife of the fists
Over him who amidst of our young men never his match had found

In stature and might: but Herakles dashed his teeth on the ground.
Beneath my father's sceptre withal the Mysians he bowed,
And the Phrygians, for hard by our marches their fields our foemen ploughed.
And the tribes of Bithynians he smote, and won their land by his might,
Even to the outfall of Rheba, and unto Kolonê's height.
And the Paphlagonians of Pelops yielded, nor faced that foe, 790
Even all round whom Billaios' darkling waters flow.
Then came the Bebrykians; and Amykus' lawless tyranny,
While Herakles dwelt afar, reft these my possessions from me,
Long carving out of my land huge cantles, till stretched the line
Of their bounds to the meads where Hypius' deep-flowing waters shine.
But ye made them to pay requital for all: it was not, I wot,
But by will of the Gods that war by Tyndareus' son was brought
That day on Bebrykia's sons, when their champion giant he slew.
Wherefore what thanks soever Lykus may render to you
With joy will I render; for meet and right it is that the weak, 800
When the strong for their helping arise, by deeds their thanks should speak.
Lo, Daskylus now will I bid that he be of your company,
Even my son, and if this man your fellow in wayfaring be,
With kindly greeting shall all men hail you, and welcome fain
Through all your way, till the mouth of the river Thermodon ye gain.
But to Tyndareus' sons on the Acherusian foreland's steep
A temple on high will I rear: far off across the deep
Shall seafarers mark that fane, and to these in prayer shall they call.
Rich fields of the fertile plain will I set apart withal
Unto them, as unto the Gods, without the city-wall.' 810
Even so through the livelong day at the banquet revelled they on.
But with dawning down to the strand they hied them, in haste to be gone.
Then went with them Lykus, and gifts in their galley to bear gave he

Without number, and sent his son, their voyaging comrade to be.
There did the doom fate-spoken descend upon Abas' son,
Idmon, in soothsaying peerless: but safety for him was there none
In his soothsaying lore, for that now must he die by the doom decreed.
For it chanced that there lay in a reedy river's water-mead,
Cooling his flanks and his mighty belly wallowed in mire,
A wild boar gleaming-tusked, so baleful a monster and dire 820
That of him were the meadow-haunting Nymphs themselves adread.
No man knew his lair; alone in the fen wide-stretching he fed.
But it chanced unto Abas' son o'er the marshy rises to fare
Of the plain, and the beast on a sudden, forth of his unseen lair
High-leaping out of the reed-bed, gashed in his sidelong rush
His thigh, that the sinews were severed, and snapped was the bone by the tush.
With one sharp cry to the earth he fell, and with answering shout
His comrades ran to the stricken; and Peleus in haste thrust out
With his hunting-spear, as the murderous monster fled to the fen.
Then turned he, and charged full on them; but Idas stabbed him then, 830
And harshly screaming he fell impaled on the keen spear-head.
There on the earth as he lay, unheeded they left him dead.
But their friend to the galley in death-throes gasping his comrades bore
Sore grieved: but he died in their arms or ever they reached the shore.
Then from their voyaging stayed they, they cared not now to depart:
To their dead friend's burial turned they in heaviness of heart.
For three whole days they wailed, and their dead, when the fourth day broke,
Did they bury as one of the princes; and Lykus and all his folk
Had part in the woeful rites; and victims of sheep not a few,
As meet and right for the dead it is, by his grave they slew. 840
And a barrow that standeth yet unto this man there did they raise,
And a token is there, to be seen by the men of the unborn days,

A galley's roller of olive-wood; into leaf doth it break
But a little below Acherusia's height: and—if I may speak
This too by the power of the Muses that stirreth within my breast—
To Bœotian men and Nisaian Apollo spake his behest,
Worship to him as unto their city's protector to pay,
And around that ancient olive a city's foundations to lay.
But by this is tradition dim, and they render the honour-meed
Unto one Agamestor, and not unto Idmon, Aiolus' seed. 850
Now who was the next that died?—for the heroes again in grief
Another earth-mound heaped for another perished chief:
Yea, there be memorials twain of the wanderers yet high-reared.
Now telleth the tale how Tiphys the Hagniad died; for his weird
Was to voyage no further thereafter; but him, far away from his home,
Short sickness hushed into sleep, the endless sleep of the tomb,
While yet were the death-rites rendered to Abas' son by the folk:
And grief unendurable seized them for this new ruin-stroke.
Yea, and when hard by the seer him too they had buried there,
On the shore of the sea did they cast them adown in utter despair, 860
Rolled in their mantles from head to foot, all hushed: no part
Had meat nor drink in their thoughts; but in bitterness of heart
They spake not, for hope of returning was dead in each man's breast.
And for grief had they gone no further, had there made end of the Quest,
But that Hêrê enkindled exceeding courage within the soul
Of Ankaius, whom Astypaleia, where Imbrasus' waters roll,
Bare to the Sea-god, a man most deft in the steering of ships.
So now unto Peleus he turned him, and spake with eager lips:
'Is it well done, Aiakus' son, that, forgetting the great work, we
On an alien shore should linger and linger?—I, even he 870
Whom Jason brought on the Quest of the Fleece from Parthenia afar,
Have knowledge of ships,—yea, even beyond my cunning in war.
Wherefore, as touching the plight of our ship, no whit fear thou.
Yea, others in steering deft came hitherward with us, I trow:
Whomsoever of these at the helm we set, no hurt shall befall

Our seafaring. Haste then, and unto our fellows tell forth all,
And unto the high emprise arouse them with heartening word.'
So spake he; the soul of the other with gladness exceeding was stirred.
No whit did he tarry, but straight in the midst of them all did he say,
'Ho, friends!—why cherish we thus a bootless sorrow for aye? 880
For I ween these twain by the doom first drawn with their life's lot died:
But in this our array there be found with us other helmsmen beside,
Yea, many an one: let us put them to proof: make we no stay;
But rouse ye unto the deed, and cast your griefs away.'
But in helpless despair unto him did the son of Aison say:
'O Aiakus' son, these helmsmen of thine—now where be they?
For they which concerning their cunning therein once vaunted loud,
Even these yet more than I with vexation of spirit are bowed.
For us then, as for the dead, ill doom doth mine heart foretell,
Whose lot shall be never to win to the town of Aiêtes the fell, 890
No, neither ever again to pass through the grim sea-gate
To the land of Hellas returning; but now shall an evil fate,
As we wax old deedless, enshroud us nameless and fameless here.'
He spake: but Ankaius eagerly proffered himself to steer
The sea-swift ship; for within him the power of the Goddess was strong.
Erginus and Nauplius then, and Euphêmus forth from the throng
Strode, eager all for the helm: but their comrades drew back these,
For that none would they have but Ankaius to guide them over the seas.
So then on the twelfth day hied them adown the Argo's crew
At dawn; for the West-wind now, the mighty wafter, blew. 900
Speedily out of the Acheron's mouth with the oars they passed,
And they shook the broad sail forth to the wind, and far and fast
With outspread canvas cleaving the leagues of summer wave,
By the outfall of Kallichorus the river swiftly they drave,
The place where the child Nysaian of Zeus, as the tale doth tell,
When, leaving the tribes of the Indians, in Thêbê he came to dwell,

Held revel, and dances in front of the cave did the God array
Wherein, through the nights unsmiling, in hallowed slumber he lay.
Wherefore the people called it the River of Dances Fair,
And the cavern the Bedchamber, seeing a God once slumbered there. 910

Thereafter espied they the barrow of Sthenelus, Aktor's son,
Who, when from valorous battle against the Amazon
He was turning aback,—for with Herakles thither to war had he hied,—
By an arrow was smitten, and there on the surf-lashed sea-strand died.
Nor yet for a space did they sail on thence; for Persephonê, won
By his prayers and tears, sent forth the spirit of Aktor's son
A moment to gaze upon men of passions like to his own.
So he mounted the crest of his barrow: on Argo looked he down,
Even such to behold as when to the war he went. On his head
His beautiful helm four-crested flashed with its plume blood-red. 920
Then down into blackness of darkness returned he: they looked thereon,
And marvelled. Then by the word of prophecy Ampykus' son,
Mopsus, caused them to land, and to pay drink-offerings due.
So furled they the sail in haste, and the hawsers forth they threw;
And there on the strand round Sthenelus' grave-mound gathered they.
Drink-offerings they poured, and the fatlings of sacrifice did they slay.
And, besides the libations, an altar they built, laying thighs on the blaze
To Apollo the Saviour of Ships; and his lyre did Orpheus upraise
And dedicate; wherefore the 'Lyre' from that day called they the place.

Then straight, when the wind blew strong, did they board the galley again, 930
And they dropped the sail from the yard, and the feet thereof did they strain
On either hand with the sheets; and over the sea did she fly

Swift-racing, as when some hawk through the welkin soaring high
To the breeze committeth his wings, and is borne fast: onward sweeping
He stirreth them not, on restful pinions in mid-heaven sleeping.
And lo, by the streams of Parthenius' seaward-murmuring water,
Most softly-sliding of rivers, they passed, where Lêto's Daughter,
What time from the hunting she cometh, ere up to the heaven she go,
In its lovely ripples cooleth her limbs from the summer-glow.
Then through the night-tide onward and onward unresting they sped. 940
Past Sêsamus, past the long Erythinian steeps they fled;
By Krôbialus and by Krômne, Kytôrus the forest-crowned;
Then, as the sun's shafts glanced o'er the waters, swept they around
Karambis; and still by an endless strand the oars they plied
Through the livelong day, and on through the night, when the daylight died.
On the shore of Assyria they landed, where Zeus to Sinopê, the child
Of Asôpus, had given a home. By his own rash promise beguiled
Zeus' self bestowed on the maiden the gift of her maidenhood.
For he longed for her love, and he promised that, whatsoever she would,
He would give her her heart's desire, and he sealed the pledge 950
with his nod:
And she in her subtlety asked her maidenhood of the God.
So in like wise made she a mock of Apollo, whose soul was fain
Of her couch, and of Halys the river withal. Nor did any man gain
His desire, in the arms of love to embrace her, and humble her pride.
Now there did noble Trikkaian Deïmachus' sons abide,—
Even three, Deïleon, Autolykus, Phlogius withal, were these,—
Since the day when they wandered away from the host of Herakles.
And these, when they marked draw near the warrior-chiefs' array,
Went shoreward to meet them, and told them in all truth who were they.

Neither willed they there to abide any longer, but fared with the 960
crew
In Argo, so soon as the cloud-dispelling south-wind blew.
So in their company went they borne by the breeze swift-blowing,
And Halys the river they left, and Iris beside him flowing,
And the river-delta land of Assyria: the selfsame day
They rounded the headland that sheltered the Amazons' harbour-
bay.
Melanippê, Arêtus' child, forth-faring, by ambuscade
Of Herakles there was caught, and her sister Hippolytê paid
For her ransom the Belt of renown, the splendour-gleaming band:
So the hero sent her back, and she gat no hurt of his hand.
In the harbour that beareth her name, where seaward Thermodon 970
pours
Ran they ashore, for that contrary now was the wind to their course.
That river—on earth there is not his like; there is none that
doth spread
Over the land so many streams from his fountain-head.
There should lack but four of a hundred, if one should tell them o'er
Each after each, and from one true fountain do all these pour.
Down from the mountains high to the plains it sendeth its rills,
From the heights which be called, men say, the Amazonian Hills.
Thence over the hilly country inland-straying they flow
Ever onward, albeit their paths in manifold windings go
This way and that evermore, wheresoever on low-lying ground 980
They may light, so roll they along; and this one afar shall be found,
And that one anear; and nameless many an one is lost
Swallowed up in the sands; and a blended remnant of all that host
Into perilous Pontus plunge with arching crests high-tossed.
And, there as they tarried, in battle against the Amazon horde
Had they closed, and in that grim strife had blood been as water
outpoured;
For all ungentle the Amazons are, neither have they regard
Unto justice, the terrible ones who the plain Doiantian ward;
But the deeds of the War-god they love, and outrage of
tyrannous scorn;

For the daughters of Ares they are, of the Nymph Harmonia born : 990
For she bare to the Man-destroyer the battle-revelling maids,
When their couch was spread mid the folds of Alkmonian forest-glades :—
But again from Zeus 'gan blow the breath of the fair south-wind ;
So sped by the blast they left the rounded foreland behind,
While the Themiskyreian Amazons yet were arming for war :
For in one great city assembled they dwelt not, but sundered afar
From their fellows throughout the land were the tribes of them parted in three ;
In the one place Themiskyreians, whose queen was Hippolytê
In that old time ; and there the Lykastians dwelt, and anon
Dart-hurling Chadisians yonder. The next day sped they on, 1000
And at nightfall unto the land of the Chalyban men they won.
That folk drive never the ploughing oxen afield : no part
Have they in the planting of fruit that as honey is sweet to the heart ;
Neither lead they the pasturing flocks over meadows a-glitter with dew :
But the ribs of the stubborn earth for the treasure of iron they hew,
And by merchandise of the same do they live : never dawning broke
Bringing respite of toil unto them, but ever midst mirk of smoke
And flame at the forge are they moiling and plying the weary stroke.
Round the headland of Zeus the All-begetter swept they then ;
And safely they sped by the land of the Tibarenian men. 1010
When a woman in that land beareth a child to her lord, on his bed
Doth her husband cast him adown, and he groaneth with close-swathed head
As in anguish of travail, the while the woman with tender care
Doth nurse him and feed, and for him the child-birth bath doth prepare.
The Sacred Mountain thereafter, and that land passed they by
Wherein the Mossynœcians dwell amid mountains high
In their towers of timber goodly-wrought, and they call the same
'Mossyni,' wherefrom moreover the nation hath gotten its name.
Strange is the justice of these, and customs uncouth have they.
Whatsoe'er we be wont to do before men in the sight of the day, 10

Or the market-stead, all this they perform their houses within ;
And whatso we do in our chambers apart, they account it not sin
Without, in the midst of the streets of their city, to do unblamed.
No modesty have they in love, but as rooting swine unshamed,
No whit abashed for the eyes of beholders that stand thereby,
On the earth for their bed of love with their women unwedded they lie.
In their loftiest block-house sitteth their king, and holdeth his court,
Decreeing his righteous judgments to them that thither resort.
Ah, luckless wight!—if perchance in his sentence he swerve from the right,
Unto prison they hale him, therein to fast till falleth the night. 1030
These passed they by, and well-nigh overagainst the shores
Of the Isle of Ares they cleft them a path with unresting oars
Through the livelong day, for the gentle breeze in the gloaming died.
Then all in a moment one of the War-god's birds they espied,
Which haunt that isle, through the welkin darting high overhead ;
And behold, his pinions he shook, and down on the ship as she sped
A feather keen hath he shot: to the leftward shoulder it sprang
Of O'ileus: he dropped from his hands his oar at the sudden pang
Of the stroke, and they marvelled all when the feather-arrow they saw.
But the shaft from the flesh did his rowing-mate Eribôtes draw ; 1040
And he bound up the wound ; for his baldric-band he unclasped, that bare
His sword-sheath hanging beside him. Sweeping on through the air
Came another of those fell birds: but already the bow was bent
Of the hero Klytius, Eurytus' son: from the string hath he sent
A swift-flying arrow against that fowl, and the shaft struck home.
Down whirling beside the swift ship splashed the bird in the foam.
Then cried Amphidamas Aleïs' son, and thus spake he:
'Nigh to us now is the Island of Ares: ye know it, who see
Yon fowl of ravin ; and little shall arrows avail us, I trow,
To win us a peaceful landing thereon ; but contrive we now
Some other device for our help, if indeed we be minded to land,

Remembering Phineus' word, and the sightless seer's command.
For not great Herakles' self, to Arcadia-land when he came,
Availed with his arrows to drive away those birds that swam
The Stymphalian mere: yea, I with mine eyes beheld that thing.
But he stood on a crag exceeding high, loud-clattering
With clash and clang in his hands his brazen battle-gear;
And far away did they flee wild-screaming in panic fear.
Wherefore contrive we now even such device as his,—
Yea, I will speak it, who heretofore have thought upon this:— 106
Set we upon our heads our helmets of lofty crest,
And changing about in turn let the half of us row, and the rest
With polished lances and bucklers fence the galley about;
And all with one accord upraise ye a mighty shout,
That the birds by the noise may be scared, by the wild unwonted cry,
As they look on our nodding crests and the bright spears tossed on high.
And if through the storm of their shafts to the island itself we shall win,
Then with clashing of brazen bucklers raise ye a mighty din.'
So spake he, and good in the sight of them all that counsel seemed.
On the heads of the heroes straightway the brazen helmets gleamed 107
Terribly flashing; above them tossed the plumes blood-red.
And the half of them now in their turn the galley with oars onsped;
And with lances and shields did the rest for Argo a covering raise.
And as when with tiling a man hath roofed his dwelling-place,
For a beauty upon his abode and a fence from the rain thereto,
And close-set each after each are they ranged in order due;
Even so did they lock their shields, so roofed they the galley o'er.
And as when from a warrior-throng upriseth the onset-roar,
When the ranks are sweeping on, when the squadrons in battle close,
Even so from the galley on high to the welkin the shout of them rose. 108

Now none of the birds yet saw they: but when, as they touched the strand
Of the island, they clashed on their bucklers, straightway on every hand
From the earth by tens of thousands uprose they in sudden dread.
And as when by the Son of Kronos the hail thick-falling is shed
From the clouds on a town and its dwellings; the house-abiders the while,
As they hearken the clatter that rattles unceasing on timber and tile,
Untroubled are sitting: the stormy tide hath smitten the roof
Not unforeseen; long since had they made all tempest-proof:
So on the men thick-showering feather-shafts did they pour,
As they darted on high o'er the sea to the hills on the farther shore. 1090
Now what was the purpose of Phineus in bidding that hero-array
Land on the War-god's isle? What help against the day
Of their need were they destined to win of their tarrying there on the way?
The sons of Phrixus unto Orchomenus voyaging
Had been sent from Aia forth by Kytaian Aiêtes the king.
In a galley of Kolchis they sailed, that the measureless wealth might be theirs
Of their sire, for in death had he so commanded these his heirs.
And exceeding nigh that day to the isle had they drawn; but lo,
The might of the wind of the north did Zeus awaken to blow,
Marking with rain the watery path of Arcturus the star. 1100
Yet through the day-tide he stirred but the leaves on the mountains afar,
Breathing but lightly over the uttermost ends of the sprays:
But at night on the sea he descended, a tempest-Titan, to raise
The surge with his blasts wild-shrieking: a black mist shrouded the sky,
And never the gleam of a star might the mariners' ken descry
Through the clouds, but over the sea's face brooded murky gloom.
And the sons of Phrixus quaking for fear of a horrible doom
Were helplessly hurled o'er the surges, and drenched with the flying spume.

And the sail by the might of the blast was snatched away, and crashed
Their ship's hull, shattered in twain by the breakers thereover 1110
that dashed.
Then by the Gods' own prompting they clutched, and as one
man clung
Those four to a mighty spar,—for that many an one had been flung
Wide from the scattered wreck,—firm-knit by the strong bolts'
clasp;
And on to the isle, evermore but a little beyond death's grasp,
The waves and the sweep of the tempest bare them in misery.
Then burst forth rain: no tongue could tell it,—it rained on the sea,
On the island; and overagainst the island the floods of it fell
Over all the land where the lawless Mossynœcians dwell.
And along with the massy beam the sweep of the surges bore
The sons of Phrixus on to the island's rocky shore 1120
In the black dark night. But the floods of Zeus-descended rain
Ceased with the dawn: and they met full soon, those companies
twain.
Then Argus first found voice, and to Argo's crew spake he:
'We beseech you by All-beholder Zeus, whosoever ye be
Of men, to have mercy and succour us now in our helplessness;
For buffeted long have we been on the sea by the rough winds' stress,
Till sundered and shattered the beams of our crazy galley were.
By your knees we entreat you then, if ye haply will hearken our
prayer,
To cover our nakedness now, and to take us whither ye go:
As youths taking pity on youths, compassionate ye our woe! 1130
O reverence ye the strangers and suppliants for Zeus's sake,
Who is Lord of the stranger and suppliant—yea, both names we take,
Even strangers and suppliants of Zeus; and over us all is his eye.'
But with heedful questioning then did Aison's son reply,
For he weened that fulfilment of Phineus' prophecy now was nigh:
'All these will we give straightway with kindly heart and hand.
But prithee now answer me truth, and tell how name ye the land
Wherein ye be dwellers;—for what need thus have ye sailed the sea?
And your names of renown tell out, and the lineage whereof ye be.'

Then Argus, as one in despairing wretchedness, answered low: 1140
'How Phrixus the Aiolid came unto Aia from Hellas, I trow,
Yourselves have certainly heard, have heard ere this the renown
Of Phrixus, who came on a day to Aiêtes' fortress-town
Bestriding the ram which Hermes created all of gold:
Yea, and the fleece thereof this day may ye yet behold;
For the ram by the beast's own counsel a sacrifice did he give
To Kronion the Fugitives' Zeus. And him did Aiêtes receive
In his palace, and gave him to wife his daughter Chalkiopê,
Nor for gifts of wooing he asked, in the joy of his heart and the glee.
Of these twain we be the children; but Phrixus our father hath died, 1150
An old man stricken with years, in Aiêtes' halls of pride.
And straightway we, giving heed to the word that our father spake,
To Orchomenus journey, Athamas' goods in possession to take.
And if, as thy word was, thou wouldst that our names be made known unto thee,
Behold, Kytisôrus is this man named, and Phrontis he;
And yonder is Melas, and Argus me myself shall ye call.'
He spake, and for this forgathering glad were the heroes all:
And they ministered unto them, marvelling much: but Jason again
Spake as was meet and right, for his heart of the tidings was fain:
'Lo now, of a surety kinsmen ye are of my sire, which have prayed 1160
That with merciful hearts we would look upon this your affliction, and aid.
For of one blood, even brethren, Kretheus and Athamas were;
And Kretheus' grandson am I, with these my companions who fare
From the selfsame Hellas, and unto Aiêtes' city I sail.
But of all these things to commune shall another time avail.
But now put raiment upon you: it came to pass, I trow,
By devising of Gods that ye came to mine hands in your sore need so.'
So spake he, and out of the ship he gave them raiment to don.
And all together now unto Ares' fane are they gone
For the sacrificing of sheep, and in all haste round about 1170
The altar they ranged them, which stood that roofless fane without,
An altar of pebbles: within was a mighty stone upreared,
A holy thing, which of yore the Amazons all revered.

And it was not their wont, from the further strand when they
    came o'er the deep,
On this same altar to burn in sacrifice oxen nor sheep;
But horses they slew, and for this great herds were they wont to keep.
There sacrificed they, and they ate of the flesh of the victims slain.
Then Aison's son in their midst uprose, and he spake yet again:
  'Zeus' self upon all things looketh, nor ever escape we his ken
Of a surety, such as be god-revering and righteous men. 118
Even so your father delivered he out of the murderous hand
Of a stepdame, and gave to him measureless wealth in a far-away
    land:
And even so you also scatheless again did he save
From the baleful storm. Now in this ship, whithersoever ye crave,
This way or that, may ye fare; or aback unto Aia's shore,
Or the wealthy city that godlike Orchomenus builded of yore.
For our ship did Athênê fashion, and clave her beams with the brass
By Pelion's crest, and her fellow-craftsman our Argus was.
But that your galley was shattered, and whelmed in ruining surge,
Ere nigh to the rocks ye came, the which in the wild sea-gorge 119
Each against other the livelong day are clashing amain.
But go to now, be ye helpers with us; for lo, we be fain
To bring that Fleece of Gold to the land of Hellas again.
Be our voyaging guides. Lo, thus do I sail to atone for their deed
Who would sacrifice Phrixus, and brought Zeus' wrath upon
    Aiolus' seed.'
  So spake he exhorting, and ceased; but with horror they
    heard that thing,
For they deemed they should find Aiêtes nowise a gentle king
Who would win that Fleece of the Ram. Then Argus spake
    the word,
In vexation of spirit that these unto suchlike quest should be stirred:
  'O friends, so far as availeth our strength, no whit at all 1200
Our help shall fail you at need, what trial soever befall.
But terribly armed is Aiêtes with murderous cruelty;
Wherefore I dread exceedingly thither to fare oversea.
And he vaunteth himself the Sun-god's seed, and around him dwell

The Kolchian tribes untold. In the awful onset-yell,
And in giant strength, might he match him with Ares' self in the f
Nay, nay, not easy it is to take that Fleece away
From Aiêtes, so mighty a serpent around and about it is coile
Deathless and sleepless. The Earth brought forth that drag
child
Mid Caucasus' glens, where the Rock Typhonian standeth: the
say
There Typhon, smitten by levin-bolts of Zeus, in the day
When against Kronion he lifted his brawny hands in fight,
Dropped from his head hot-gushing the gore, and in such ill plight
To the hills and the Plain Nisaian he came, and to this day there
'Neath the waters whelmed doth he lie of the dark Serbonian mere.'
So spake he, and many a face of them that heard grew white
To know what manner of emprise was this. But spake forthright
Peleus, and answered with words of gallant chiding, and said:
'Nay, good my friend, not thus let thy spirit be over-adread,
For that not so lacking in prowess be we, that our hearts should fear
To make trial of manhood against Aiêtes in battle-gear.
Nay, but I trow we also have somewhat of cunning in war
Which thitherward fare; for by blood of the kin of the Blessèd
we are.
If therefore in all lovingkindness he yield not the Fleece of Gold,
Little, I ween, shall avail him his Kolchian tribes untold.'
In such wise each unto other they spake, and in such wise
replied,
Till they turned to their rest, fulfilled of the feast of the eventide.
And at dawn, when they wakened from slumber, a light wind
softly blew;
And they hoised up the sail: in the breeze of the morning the
canvas drew.
And away from the War-god's Island sped they far and fast;
And now at the falling of night by Philyra's island they passed.
There Kronos, Ouranos' son, what time in Olympus he reigned
O'er the Titans, and Zeus yet a babe in the Cretan Cave was
sustained

In life by the priests, the Curêtes of Ida,—with Philyra lay
When he baffled Rheia's watch ; but the Goddess amidst of their play
Came suddenly on them : and Kronos leapt from the dalliance-bed,
And away in the form of a steed of tossing mane he sped.
But Ocean's daughter forsook that land and folk in her shame ;
And unto the long Pelasgian ridges Philyra came,
Where Cheiron the monster, the half of him horse, but otherwhere
Goodly to see as a God, for a pledge of love she bare.
Thence past the Makronian people, and past the far-stretching land
Of Becheirans they ran, past overweening Sapeirans' strand,
And past the Byzêrans thereafter ; for forward cleaving the seas
Went rushing the prow evermore, on-borne by the gentle breeze.
And to them, as they sped by, opened a Pontic gulf cleft deep ;
And lo, the Caucasian mountains' precipice-wall rose steep—
Sheer cliffs ; and Prometheus there, with his limbs to the rough rocks gripped
By brazen gyves, whose knots no writhings have riven nor slipped,
Fed with his liver an eagle that aye swooped back on the prey.
High over their mast at even a whir and a rush heard they ;
And anigh to the clouds they beheld it : yet even from that far height
Did it shake the sail with the fanning of those vast pinions' flight :
For the form and the measure thereof was like no fowl of the air,
But as polished oars most huge its swift-swaying wing-feathers were.
Nor long thereafter they heard an exceeding bitter cry,
As torn was Prometheus' liver, and rang the vault of the sky
With his screaming, until again from the mountain darting back
They marked where the ravening eagle sped on the selfsame track.
And at nightfall, by guidance of Argus, the broad-flowing stream did they gain
Of Phasis, and there was the uttermost bourne of the Pontic main.
Then straightway the sail they furled, and the yard-arm let they fall,
And stowed in the mast-trough then ; and the mast unstepped they withal,

And lowered in haste, till it lay along: then rowed they fast
Into the river's mighty stream; round the prow as they passed
He surged as he yielded them way; and they had on the left-
ward hand
High Caucasus now, and the city Kytaian of Aia-land;
And to rightward the plain and the holy grove of the War-god lay
Where keepeth the serpent watch and ward on the Fleece alway,
As it hangeth amidst of the thick-leaved boughs of an oak outspread. 1270
And Aison's son himself from a golden chalice shed
Into the river libations of sweet unmingled wine
Unto Earth, to the Gods of the land, to the Spirits of Heroes divine
Which had died, and with bowed knees prayed them their sorrow-
less help to give
Of their grace, and with welcome propitious the hawsers of Argo
receive.
Then straightway Ankaios spake the word to his fellows, and cried:
'Lo now, to the Kolchian land have we won, where the
waters glide
Of Phasis:—the time is come for counsel, to choose our part,
If with soft words now we shall make assay of Aiêtes' heart,
Or if other endeavour perchance shall avail us in this our need.' 1280
So spake he, and Jason thereon commanded, by Argus' rede,
To a backwater leaf-overshadowed to run the galley aside,
And to warp her up to the anchor-stone, off-shore to ride:
Now the place was anigh to them then. So slept they there
through the night,
And soon to their longing eyes appeared the dawning's light.

Come, Erato, now, stand by me : of thy lips let me be taught
In what manner thereafter Jason the Fleece to Iolkos brought
Through the love of Medea : for thou in the things by the Cyprian ordained
Hast part, and maidens unwedded by thine enchantments are chained ;
Wherefore it is that a name that telleth of love thou hast gained.
So there in the close-pleached covert of river-reeds unseen
Did the heroes in ambush wait. Then marked them Hêrê the queen
And Athênê withal ; and aloof from Zeus' self turned they aside,
And the rest of the Gods everlasting, and into a chamber they hied
For counsel : and first spake Hêrê, to try Athênê therein : 10
'Thyself now first, O daughter of Zeus, our counsel begin.
What needeth to do ? Wilt thou frame some subtle device, that these
May win from Aiêtes and bear unto Hellas the Golden Fleece ?
Or with words shall they overpersuade him, with soft speech melt him to ruth ?
Now nay, for a proud and haughty scorner he is in sooth :
Yet it may not in any wise be that our emprise turn aside.'
So did she speak ; and straightway to her Athênê replied :
'Yea, mine heart even as thine herein was pondering
When with questions thou searchedst me, Hêrê. Howbeit, as touching the thing,
Not yet in mine heart have I found this wile, which shall help 20 the need

Of the soul of the chieftains: and yet have I mused upon many a rede.'
She spake; and their eyes on the threshold before their feet they cast,
As they pondered of this and of that, till Hêrê cried at the last—
For a thought in her heart had birth, and her word was first again:—
'Let us hence to the Cyprian Queen; and when we be come, we twain
Will pray her to bid her son, if perchance he will do this deed,
At Aiêtes' sorceress-daughter a shaft from his bow to speed,
And bewitch her with love for Jason: by her devising, I trow,
Bearing the Fleece away unto Hellas the hero shall go.'
She spake; and her counsel of wisdom pleased Athênê well; 30
And she answered—and now from her lips soft words of persuasion fell:—
'Hêrê, my father begat me unweeting of shafts of love:
Nothing I know of desire, or the magic spells thereof.
But if this word pleaseth thyself, of a truth will I go with thee.
Yet thou must speak our request when the Cyprian's face we see.'
Then soared they away, and unto the mighty palace they came
Of Kypris: her lord the Halt-foot God had builded the same
For his bride, when he led her forth from the halls of Zeus of yore.
So they entered the courts, and under the chamber-corridor
Stood, where the hands of the Goddess the couch of Hephaistus 40 prepared.
But he at the dawning thence to his forges and anvils had fared
In the cavern wide of a sea-washed isle, where he aye wrought on
With the fire-blasts fashioning manifold marvels: but she alone
Facing the doors of the palace sat in a carven chair.
Over her shoulders white had she loosened the waves of her hair,
And a golden comb through their ripples she drew, and now would she braid
The long plaits up; but before her beheld she the twain, and she stayed
Her hand, and she rose from her throne, and she bade them within her hall,

And on couches she caused them to sit; thereafter herself withal
Sat down, and her uncombed tresses coiled she about her head; 50
And smiling innocent-arch to the Goddesses twain she said:
'Dear sisters, what purpose or need hath brought you hither at last
Who have tarried so long afar? Why come ye? In days overpast
Not oft hath your presence been here—too great for such as I!'
Then unto her did Hêrê with stately speech reply:
'Thou mockest, the while our heart with calamity's shadow is dark,
For that even now in Phasis the river moored is the bark
Of Aison's son, and the rest on the Quest of the Fleece that have come.
For all their sakes—for that nigh is the deed and the hour of doom—
Exceeding sorely we fear, but most for Aison's son. 60
Him I—yea, though unto Hades now he were voyaging on
To break those fetters of brass wherewithal Ixion is bound—
Will deliver, so far as strength in these my limbs is found,
Lest Pelias should laugh, having 'scaped the doom, his iniquity's price,
Who in pride of his heart hath left me unhonoured with sacrifice.
Yea, and before that Jason was passing dear unto me,
Even since, when Anaurus' outfall in full flood poured to the sea,
In the day when men's heart-righteousness fain would I prove and know,
Coming back from the hunting he met me; and all overmantled with snow
Were the mountain-ridges and towering peaks, and adown from them poured 70
The winter-tide floods, and the rolling torrents rattled and roared;
And he pitied the grey old crone, and he took me up at my prayer,
And over the seaward-madding flood on his shoulders he bare.
Therefore I honour him now, and will honour: unharmed shall he be
Of Pelias' spite,—yea, though his return be unaided of thee.'
So spake she: the lips of Kypris could frame no word for a space,
In her awe to behold great Hêrê asking of her a grace.

And with courteous-gentle speech then spake she answering:
'O Goddess dread, may there never be found any viler thing
Than Kypris, if I shall set at naught desire of thine 80
Or in word or in deed, whatsoever these frail hands of mine
May avail; and for all that I do nor thank nor requital would I.'
So spake she; and Hêrê again in her wisdom made reply:
'It is nowise for lack of might that we come, nor of strength of hand.
But thou to thy child in peaceful quietness speak thy command
To bewitch Aiêtes' daughter with love for Aison's seed;
For if she with her counsel shall help him, with loving favour lead,
Lightly, I ween, shall the hero win the Fleece of Gold,
And return to Iolkos, seeing the maiden is subtle-souled.'
So did she speak; and the Lady of Cyprus answered thereto: 90
'Hêrê, Athênê, my child would render obedience to you
More than to me: in your presence a little abashed shall he be,
Bold boy though he be:—but nothing at all he regardeth me.
But ever he striveth against me, and laugheth mine hests to scorn.
Yea, I am minded, by that his naughtiness overborne,
His evil-sounding shafts and his bow therewithal to break
Full in his sight: for of late this threat in his anger he spake,
That, if I refrained not mine hands while his passion within him was strong,
My scathe upon mine own head should be, upon me the wrong.'
So spake she: the Goddesses smiled, and each in her fellow's eyes 100
Looked: but again she spake, and her speech was burdened with sighs:
'Unto others my griefs be for laughter alone, and I ought not so
To tell them to all:—enough that mine heart must its bitterness know.
Howbeit, if this be all your soul's desire this day,
I will try, and with soft words win him: he shall not say me nay.'
She spake; and with touch caressing did Hêrê her slim hand take,
And, softly smiling the while, she answered, and thus she spake:
'Even so, Kythereia, with speed perform thou this our request
As thou sayest; and vex not thyself, neither strive with angered breast

With thy child: from his troubling of thee hereafter shalt thou have rest.'

She spake, and she rose from her seat, and Athênê passed at her side,
As forth they sped and away, they twain: but the Cyprian hied
To Olympus, and down its ridges, seeking her child, she passed.
And in Zeus's fruitful orchard-close she found him at last,
Not alone, Ganymedes was with him, the boy whom Zeus on a day
From earth unto heaven had brought to abide with Immortals for aye,
When he greatly desired his beauty. With golden dice these two
Were playing, even as boys like-minded be wont to do.
And already Eros the greedy the palm of his left hand pressed,
Filled full with the golden spoils of his winning, against his breast,
Standing upright; the while a sweet flush mantled and glowed
O'er the bloom of his cheeks: but the other was crouching on bent knees bowed
In downcast silence: he had but twain; on the earth he flung
One after other, by Eros's gibing laughter stung.
But, even as fared the former, he lost them, the last of his dice;
And with empty and helpless hands he went; and his down-drooped eyes
Marked not the coming of Kypris. Before her child did she stand,
And with loving chiding she spake, as she laid on his lips her hand:
'Why smil'st thou in triumph, thou naughty varlet? Hast thou not beguiled
Thy playmate?—and fairly hast thou overcome that innocent child?
Go to now, accomplish my bidding, the thing that I shall ask;
And the plaything exceeding fair of Zeus shall requite thy task,
Which was fashioned by Adresteia his nurse for her babe's delight,
When, a child, he thought as a child, in the cave 'neath Ida's height.
A ball fair-rounded it is: no goodlier toy, I wot,
Couldst thou get thee mid all the marvels by hands of Hephaistus wrought.
Of gold be the zones of it fashioned; and round each several one
Twofold be the seams of broidery-thread that encircling run.
But the stitches thereof be hidden: there coileth around them all
A spiral of blue. From thine hand if thou cast it on high, that ball

Even as a star shall flash through the air in a fiery glow.
This will I give thee—but thou must bewitch with a shaft from thy bow
Aiêtes' daughter with love for Jason. But see that herein
Thou tarry not; else a meaner requital than this shalt thou win.'
So spake she, and welcome the word was; with gladness he heard that thing:
And he cast away those toys, and with eager hands did he cling
Clasping the Goddess's raiment about on either side.
And he pleaded with her even then to bestow it: but Kypris replied
With gentle words,—and his cheeks unto hers she drew the while,
And clasping him close she kissed him, and answer she made with a smile: 150
'Be witness now thy beloved head, yea, also mine,
That I will not defraud thee: indeed and in truth the gift shall be thine,
When the heart of Aiêtes' daughter is pierced by thine arrow divine.'
Then gathered he up his dice, and the tale of them heedfully told,
And he cast them into his mother's glistering bosom-fold.
By his baldric of gold he slung from his shoulder the quiver that leant
On a tree-trunk, and took the bow for sorrow of mortals bent.
From the fruitful orchard of Zeus's palace forth did he fare,
And thereafter came to Olympus' portals high in air.
Thence is a sheer-descending path from the height of the sky; 160
And there the Poles, twin mountains, uplift their heads on high,
Precipice-steeps, earth's loftiest-towering crests, whereon
With his earliest rays at the dawning uplifted resteth the sun.
Far under, the life-sustaining earth and the cities slept
Of men, and the sacred rivers; anon before him upleapt
Hill-peaks, and outspread the sea, through the wide air on as he swept.
Now the heroes apart on the thwarts of their galley in ambush yet,
Where the backwater gleamed of the river, for taking of counsel were met:
And the son of Aison himself was speaking, and all they heard,
As row upon row in their places they sat, and none spake word:

'O friends, of a truth the thing that seemeth good in mine eyes,
That will I utter; howbeit with you the fulfilment lies.
This Quest all share, and in counsel and speech all ye have part.
Whosoever in silence withholdeth his rede and the thoughts of his heart,
Let him know, he only bereaveth of home-return our Quest.
Now I counsel that ye by the ship with your war-gear abide at rest.
But I, even I, will go forth first to Aiêtes' hall.
I will take but the sons of Phrixus, and twain of the rest therewithal.
And I, when I meet him, with words will first make trial, to know
If he haply for lovingkindness the Fleece of Gold will bestow, 180
Or will grant it not, but in pride of his might will set us at naught.
For so, when the lesson of evil first by himself hath been taught,
Shall we then advise us, whether the ordeal of battle to try,
Or if other device shall avail us, refraining the onset-cry.
But let us not rashly, or ever persuasion be put to the test,
Despoil this man of his own possession:—nay, it were best
To come before him, and first with speech his grace to win:—
Yea, oft fair speech hath prevailed in a matter, and lightly—wherein
Little had prowess availed—for that winsomely it stole
On the heart: yea hereby Phrixus wrought on the grim king's soul, 190
When a stepdame's guile and the sacrifice-stroke of a father he fled,
To receive him: in no man's breast is shame so utterly dead,
But he honoureth Guest-ward Zeus, and regardeth his ordinance dread.'

Then praised they with one accord the counsel of Aison's seed,
Nor did any man turn therefrom, to utter another rede.
Then called he on Phrixus' children to follow, and chose of his band
Telamon and Augeias; moreover himself took Hermes' wand.
Forthright from the ship over water and reed-fringed river-side
Passed they, and out beyond o'er the swell of the plain they hied.
The Plain Kirkaian, I wot, is it called, and, row upon row, 200
Willows and osiers there exceeding many grow.
Mid their topmost branches cord-bound corpses be hanging there;
For to Kolchians unto this day an abomination it were

To burn on the pyre their men which have died; nor yet in the ground
Is their wont to lay them, and heap thereover the token-mound.
But in hides untanned of oxen they roll them, and hang midst trees
Without the city. Yet earth hath equal share in these
With the air; for in graves of the earth be they wont their women to lay.
Lo, this is their custom, and this their ordinance for aye.
Now, anigh as they drew, did Hêrê with loving thought for the men 210
Spread thick mist all through the city, that so they might 'scape the ken
Of the thousands there, to Aiêtes' hall while fared they on.
And when from the plain to Aiêtes' city and palace they won,
Then straightway Hêrê scattered again that cloudy haze.
At the entrance they stood, and they looked on the courts of the king in amaze,
On the gateways wide, and the columns that all around the walls
In ordered lines uprose; and high on the roofs of the halls
Did a coping of stone upon rows of brazen triglyphs lie.
And over the threshold in peace they went. And hard thereby
Were garden-vines in fulness of blossom, mantled o'er 220
With green leaves, high uplifted in air. And fountains four
Ever-flowing beneath them ran, which were delved with magic spell
By Hephaistus, the one whereof did with gushing of milk upwell,
And the second with wine, and the third with incense-breathing oil.
And with water the fourth ran; steaming for heat did the same upboil
At the setting-tide of the Pleiads; but out of its rock-hewn cave
Cold even as ice in their rising-season bubbled the wave.
Even such were the marvellous works that Hephaistus the craft-wise God
Fashioned within Kytaian Aiêtes' palace-abode.
And he wrought for him brazen-footed bulls, and their mouths 230 were of brass,
And the terrible splendour of blazing flame the breath of them was.

Moreover a plough of unbending adamant, all in one,
Did he forge for him, making therein his requital of thanks to the Sun,
Who had taken him up in his chariot, faint from the Phlegra fight.
There also was builded the inner court, and around it were pight
Many chambers on either hand with two-leaved doors fair-dight;
And without them a rich-wrought corridor ran to left and to right;
And athwart them the loftiest buildings rose upon either side,
Whereof one over its fellows uplifted its crest of pride:
Therein with his queen Aiêtes abode, the lord of the land; 240
And thereby did the mansion fair of his son Absyrtus stand,
Whom a Nymph Caucasian, Asterodeia, bare to his bed
Or ever he led Eiduia home, his wife true-wed,
Daughter of Tethys and Ocean, even their youngest one:
But the sons of the Kolchians gave him a new name, Phaëthon,
'The Shining,' for all the youths were in beauty by him outshone.
In the rest did the handmaid-train and Aiêtes' daughters abide,
Chalkiopê and Medea. And now had Medea hied
From her chamber forth to her sister's; for Hêrê restrained her that day
That she went not abroad: but little she wont theretofore to stay 250
In the palace, but all day long in the temple of Hekatê
Her conversation she had, for the Goddess's priestess was she.
And she saw them, and cried aloud; and suddenly heard was her call
Of Chalkiopê: and her handmaids down at their feet let fall
Their yarn and their threads, and forth of the chamber ran they all
In a throng, and amidst them the mother: and there beholding her sons
She cast up her hands in her gladness; and those re-given ones
Greeted their mother, and lovingly gazed on her, folding her round
With their arms, till her words mid sobbings broken utterance found:
'So then ye were not to leave me in lonely childless pain, 260
And to wander afar; and fate hath turned you backward again.
O hapless I!—what yearning for Hellas awoke in your breasts,
By some strange woeful madness, at Phrixus your father's behests?
Bitter affliction did he ordain, when dying he lay,
For mine heart!—O why to Orchomenus' city far away—

Whosoe'er this Orchomenus be—for Athamas' wealth should ye go,
Leaving your mother alone to bear her burden of woe?'
  So spake she, and last came forth Aiêtes hastening,
And came Eiduia herself, the wife of Aiêtes the king,
When the outcry of Chalkiopê she heard. And the court straightway 270
Was filled with a noisy throng; for some of the thralls 'gan flay
A huge ox, some with the brass 'gan cleave the billets dry,
And some with the fire 'gan heat the baths. There was none thereby
That lagged in his task, as they toiled beneath that stern king's eye.
  But Eros the while through the mist-grey air passed all unseen
Troubling them, even as heifers that hear the piping keen
Of the gadfly—'the breese' do the herders of oxen name the thing.
In the forecourt beneath the lintel swiftly his bow did he string:
From his quiver took he a shaft sigh-laden, unshot before:
With swift feet all unmarked hath he passed the threshold o'er, 280
Keen-glancing around: he hath glided close by Aison's son:
He hath grasped the string in the midst, and the arrow-notch laid thereon.
Straightway he strained it with both hands sundered wide apart,
And he shot at Medea; and speechless amazement filled her heart.
And the God himself from the high-roofed hall forth-flashing returned
Laughing aloud. Deep down in the maiden's bosom burned
His arrow like unto flame; and at Aison's son she cast
Side-glances of love evermore; and panted hard and fast
'Neath its burden the heart in her breast, nor did any remembrance remain
Of aught beside, but her soul was melted with rapturous pain. 290
And as some poor daughter of toil, who hath distaff ever in hand,
Heapeth the slivers of wood about a blazing brand
To lighten her darkness with splendour her rafters beneath, when her eyes
Have prevented the dawn; and the flame, upleaping in wondrous wise
From the one little torch, ever waxing consumeth all that heap;
So, burning in secret, about her heart did he coil and creep,
Love the destroyer: her soft cheeks' colour went and came,

Pale now, and anon, through her soul's confusion, with crimson aflame.
  Now when ready-dight was the banquet by labour of handmaid and thrall,
And by steaming baths' refreshment their faces were lightened 300
  withal,
Gladly they feasted and drank till their souls were satisfied.
Thereafter unto the sons of his daughter Aiêtes cried:
And this was the word of his mouth, as inquisition he made:
  'Ye sons of my daughter and Phrixus, the man unto whom I paid
Honour above all men that have stood mine halls within,
How came ye to Aia returning?—did some dark curse of sin
Break short in the midst your escape? Ye would not hear nor obey
Me, when I set before you the endless length of the way.
For I marked it, when once I was whirled in my father the Sun-god's car,
In the day wherein he wafted my sister Kirkê afar 310
Unto Hesperia-land, till the chariot at last made stay
On the Tyrrhene mainland-shore, where even unto this day
She abideth, exceeding far from the land where the Kolchians dwell.
What profit or pleasure in words? Speak out and plainly tell
What happed in the midst of your journey, and say who these men be
That have come with you hither. And where from your galley ashore came ye?'
  So did he question; and answered him Argus before the rest—
But his heart misgave him concerning the son of Aison's quest;—
With soft words spake he, seeing that he was the elder-born:
  'Aiêtes, that our ship full quickly asunder was torn 320
By stormy blasts, and we, unto beams of the wreck as we clung,
On the beach of the War-god's Isle by the sweep of the surges were flung
In the murky night. Some God from destruction redeemed us, I trow;
For even the birds of Ares, that wont to haunt ere now
That desolate isle of the sea, even these we found no more;

But these men drave them away when they landed the day before
From their galley : and there by the purpose of Zeus, compassionate
Of our plight, were they kept from departing, or bound peradventure by fate.
Straightway to our need with food and with raiment they ministered,
So soon as the name of Phrixus the far-renowned they heard, 330
Yea, and thine own : for unto thy town be they voyaging.
And if thou wouldst know their need, I will hide not from thee the thing.
A certain king being fain with exceeding vehement spite
From his land and possessions to drive this man, forasmuch as in might
Of his hands he was peerless amongst the heroes of Aiolus' seed,
Sendeth him hither on desperate venture. For fate had decreed
That Aiolus' line shall escape not the soul-afflicting ire
Of implacable Zeus, and his wrath, and the curse unendurably dire,
And the vengeance for Phrixus, till cometh to Hellas the Fleece of Gold.
And his ship did Pallas Athênê fashion : not such is her mould 340
As the fashioning is of the ships that be found 'mid the Kolchian folk—
Whereof our hap was the vilest, for even at a touch it broke
Of the raging surge and the wind ;—but this ship holdeth fast,
Gripped by her bolts, through the buffeting fury of every blast.
And swiftly alike she runneth before the wind, and when
She is sped by the oars unresting in hands of stalwart men.
He hath gathered within her whatso mightiest heroes there are
In Achaia-land, and hath come to thy city from wandering far
By cities, by dread sea-gulfs, if thou haply wouldst grant his request,
That the thing he desireth may be : for nowise he cometh to wrest 350
Aught from thine hands by force : he is minded to pay unto thee
Fair quittance for this thy gift. Of the bitter enmity
Of the Sauromatai hath he heard ; he will quell them to bow to thy sway.
And their name and their lineage, if fain thou wouldst hear them, as thou dost say,

What men they be, I will tell to thee all in order due.
This man, for whose helping assembled from Hellas a hero-crew,
Jason they call him, the son of Aison, Krêtheus' seed.
Now, if this man of Krêtheus' lineage cometh in very deed,
Of a truth by the father's blood shall he be of kin unto us,
For that Krêtheus and Athamas both were the children of Aiolus, 360
And Phrixus moreover was child of Athamas, Aiolus' son.
And, if aught thou know'st of the Sun-god's seed, lo, here is one,
Augeias; and Telamon this, the son of the mighty in fame
Aiakus; yea, and of Zeus's loins great Aiakus came.
And in like wise all the rest, which have hither companioned his way,
The sons and the grandsons they are of the Gods which abide for aye.'

So Argus spake: but the wrath of the king waxed hot as he heard,
And his soul like a stormy sea with a tempest of fury was stirred.
Fuming he spake—with the sons of his daughter above the rest
Was he wroth, for he weened that of these had Jason been moved 370 to the Quest:
And the light of his anger leapt from his eyes as levin-flame:
'And will ye not straightway be gone from my sight, ye felons of shame,
And depart from the land afar with the guile of your treachery,
Ere a bitter Fleece and a bitter Phrixus here ye see,
With your friends back faring to Hellas? Not for the Fleece come ye!
Nay, but my sceptre and kingly honour ye come to take!
Now, if ye had broken not bread at my table or ever ye spake,
Your tongues had I surely cut out, and had hewn from the wrist each hand,
And had sent you forth with naught but your feet to fare through the land:
So should ye refrain you thereafter from coming on such like quest!—380
Lo, and the lies ye have spoken concerning the Gods ever-blest!'

So passioned the king: but even to its depths the spirit burned
Of Aiakus' son, and hotly his soul within him yearned
To fling back a deadly defiance. But Jason, or ever he spake,

Stayed him, and gently speaking an answer of peace did he make:
'Bear with me, Aiêtes, as touching this Quest: no such wild dream
To thy city and halls hath brought us as thou peradventure dost deem.
Nought such do we covet:—what man of his will, from an alien to wrest
His possessions, would fare over such wide seas? By the ruthless behest
Of a tyrannous king was I hitherward sent, and the doom of a God. 390
Show favour to this our entreaty; and so will I publish abroad
Thy name and thy glory all Hellas through. Yea, ready we are
To render for this unto thee requital of service in war,
Whether it be that ye fain would bow the Sauromatans' pride
Under your sceptred sway, or whatso nation beside.'
Then ceased he, with gentle utterance proffering love: but the king
A twofold purpose the while in his soul was pondering,
Whether to make assault on them then and there, and to slay,
Or to put their might to the test. And he counted the better way,
Thus as he pondered, the second, and answered in subtlety: 400
'Stranger, what hast thou to do to tell all this unto me?
For if ye be seed of the Gods in truth, or if ye which have hied
To the aliens' land be peers of Aiêtes in aught beside,
I will give thee to bear away, if thou wilt, the Fleece of Gold,
When first I have tried thee. Nought I begrudge to the hero-souled,
Even as ye tell me of him that in Hellas beareth sway.
And the test of your valour and prowess shall be a certain essay,
Which mine own hands compass, fraught though it be with deadly bane.
Two brazen-footed bulls have I: on the War-god's plain
They pasture: the breath from their mouths in flames of fire doth stream. 410
These yoke I, and drive through the War-god's stubborn glebe that team,
Four ploughgates; and even to the end my ploughshare cleaveth it fast.
No seed of the Lady of Corn in the furrows thereof do I cast,
But the teeth of a terrible serpent; and up from the earth they grow

In fashion of armèd men; but straightway I lay them low
With the thrusts of my spear, as around me they throng, a battle-ring.
With the dawning I yoke my team, and I cease from mine harvesting
At the eventide hour. And thou, if thou bring such deeds to pass,
That day shalt win this Fleece, as thy king's commandment was.
But I give it thee not ere then; neither hope it; for shame should it be 420
That a mighty champion should yield to a man that is worser than he.'

So spake he: but silent the hero sat, with his eyes on the ground.
Speechless he sat: no help for the desperate evil he found.
Long time he communed with his heart; no way through the darkness gleamed
To take on him stoutly the task, for a mighty deed it seemed.
But late and at last he spake, and he answered warily:

'Full straitly, Aiêtes, within thy right art thou shutting me.
Yet this will I dare, this emprise mighty beyond all thought;
Yea, though my doom be to die: for a man may light upon nought
More dread to encounter than ruthless fate's overmastering hand, 430
Which hitherward also constrained me to come at a king's command.'

So spake he, filled with despair; but the king made answer to him,
Sore troubled there as he sat, with words exceeding grim:

'Come then to the gathering, thou who art fain this toil to essay.
But if thou shalt fear on the necks of the oxen the yoke to lay,
Or if from the deadly harvesting backward thou shrink in dismay,
Then will I look unto this, that another, taught by thee,
May shudder to come in such malapert sort to a mightier than he.'

Roundly he spake, and he ceased; and Jason uprose from his seat,
And Augeias and Telamon with him; but followed them only the feet 440
Of Argus; for even at the moment a sign to his brethren he cast
There in their place to tarry: so forth of the hall they passed.
But the son of Aison outshone all there in wondrous wise
In goodlihead and in grace: ever wandered the maiden's eyes
Askance unto him, as she stealthily parted her veil's soft gleam.
And her heart was a smouldering fire of pain; and her soul, as a dream,

Stole after her love, flitting still in his track as his feet fared on.
So they from the halls in exceeding vexation of spirit are gone.
But Chalkiopê, from the wrath of Aiêtes shrinking in dread,
Hastily unto her bower with those her sons had fled. 450
And Medea thereafter followed; and surged like a rushing river
The thoughts through her breast—the thoughts that Love awakeneth ever.
And before her eyes the vision of all evermore she had—
Himself, even like as he was, and the vesture wherein he was clad,
How he spake, how he sat on his seat, how forth of the doors he strode,
And she dreamed as she mused that all the world beside had showed
None other such man. In her ears evermore the music rung
Of his voice, and the words that in sweetness of honey had dropped from his tongue.
And she trembled for him, lest the bulls or Aiêtes himself might slay
Her beloved, and took up a mourning for him, as though he lay 460
Dead even now; and adown her cheeks soft-stealing tears
Flowed, of her measureless pity, her burden of haunting fears.
And she mourned, and the low lamentation wailed from her tortured breast:
'Why, wretch that I am, is this anguish upon me?—or be he the best
Of heroes, who now is to perish, or be he the vilest of all,
Let him go to his doom!—yet O that on him no scathe might fall!
Oh might it be so, thou Daughter of Perseus, Goddess revered!
Oh might he but win home, 'scaping his doom!—but if this be his weird,
By the bulls to be overmastered, or ever it be too late
Might he know it, that I be not forced to exult o'er the thing 470
that I hate!'
So was the maiden distraught by the cares that racked her mind.
But when those others had left the folk and the city behind,
On the path whereby at the first from the river-plain they had gone,
Even then, and with these words, Argus spake unto Aison's son:
'This counsel of mine, O Aison's son, thou wilt haply despise:

Yet in desperate strait to forbear from the trial seemeth not wise.
Thou hast heard me tell of a maiden that practiseth sorcery
Under the teaching of Perseus' daughter Hekatê.
Now if we might win her to help us, thou needest not fear any more
To be vanquished in this thine endeavour:—howbeit my fear is sore 480
Lest haply my mother will take not upon her to move her thereto.
Yet in any wise back will I wend to essay what entreaty may do;
For over us all alike is destruction hanging this day.'
So spake he in kindness of heart, and in answer did Jason say:
'Dear friend, if this seemeth good in thy sight, I say not nay.
Hasten thou then, and with words of weight to thy mother pray
Till thou stir her to help us:—howbeit a pitiful hope is the best
For our home-return, if this in the keeping of women must rest.'
So spake he; and soon to the backwater came he: with hearts full fain
Did their comrades greet them, and question, beholding them again. 490
But unto them Aison's son in heaviness spake the word:
'O friends, the heart of Aiêtes the ruthless is wholly stirred
With anger against us: of all those things whereof ye inquire
Nor for me nor for you appeareth the goal of our desire.
Two brazen-footed bulls on the War-god's plain, he saith,
Pasture; in flames of fire from the mouths of them streameth the breath:
And with these must I plough him ploughgates four of a fallow field;
And seed of a serpent's jaws will he give, and for crop shall it yield
Earth-born warriors in harness of brass. In the selfsame day
These must I slay. And of this—for I found no better way, 500
In mine heart as I pondered—I promised outright to make essay.'
He spake, and it seemed unto all an impossible task. For a space
Silent they sat, and each man gazed in his fellow's face,
By despair bowed down, by calamity crushed, till Peleus at last
With stout words spake to hearten the heroes all aghast:
'Full time is it now to be counselling what we shall do. In rede
Small profit, I trow, shall be found; strong hands must help our need.
If thou then art minded to yoke the bulls of Aiêtes the king,
O hero Aison's son, and thine heart is good for the thing,

Up then, and keep thy promise, and gird up thy loins for the toil. 510
But if aught thine heart mistrusteth her manhood, and feareth the foil,
Neither goad thyself on, nor yet for another of these look round
As thou sitt'st in their midst: for one that shall nowise flinch hath been found,
Even I; for the bitterest pang is but death, to which all men are bound.'
So spake Aiakus' son; and Telamon's spirit was stirred,
And swiftly in haste he uprose; and Idas uprose for the third
With heart uplifted; and rose the sons of Tyndareus then;
And rose with them Oineus' son, who was numbered among strong men,
Albeit not yet so much as the tender down on his chin
Showed; with such hero-might was his spirit uplifted within. 520
But the rest unto these gave place, and were still: then spake straightway
Argus to these for the contest that longed, and thus did he say:
'Friends, haply to this may we come at the last: but ere that be,
Help for our need shall be found with my mother, it seemeth me.
Wherefore refrain you a little yet, how eager soe'er,
And abide in the ship as aforetime: for better it is to forbear,
Than reckless-hearted to choose the path to destruction's lair.
In the halls of Aiêtes nurtured a certain maiden doth dwell
Whom Hekatê taught strange cunning in herbs of the witch-wife's spell,
Even all that on solid land or in fleeting water grow. 530
And therewith she turneth to balm the fireblast's fervent glow,
And rivers in mid rush roaring she suddenly causeth to stand,
And constraineth the stars and the paths of the holy moon with a band.
Of her we bethought us, the while from the palace we trod the way,
If haply my mother, seeing that sisters born be they,
Could persuade this maiden, that so for the contest her help she may lend.
And if this thing appeareth good in your eyes, of a truth will I wend
To the palace-hall of Aiêtes aback this selfsame day

To try her :—a God peradventure will help when I make essay.'
He spake, and the Gods of their kindness sent forth a sign in 540
their sight ;
For a fearful dove from the might of a hawk swift-winging her flight
From on high into Jason's bosom fell in her panic affright.
But the hawk swooped blindly, and fluttered impaled on the high
stern-crest.
Then on Mopsus a spirit of prophecy came, and he cried to the rest:
'Unto you, O friends, by the will of the Gods this token is sent;
For in none other wise shall ye better interpret the sign's intent
That we seek to the maiden, and woo her with speech of entreaty fair
With our uttermost wit ; and I ween she will not reject our prayer,
If Phineus foretold that your home-return should be brought to pass
With help of the Cyprian Goddess. Her gentle bird it was 550
That escaped from destruction. As now mine heart doth in
vision foresee
As touching this omen, O that so in the end it may be !
Friends, let us cry to the Queen of Kythera to help our need ;
And straightway obey ye the counsel of Argus with diligent heed.'
He spake, and the young men praised it, calling to mind the word
Of Phineus the prophet ; but Idas alone rose anger-stirred
Shouting aloud in his fierceness of wrath, and thus did he say :
'Out on it !—were women our voyaging-fellows through all
that way ?
We men that be calling on Kypris now for our help to arise,
And not on the War-god's mighty strength ?—and by turning 560
your eyes
On doves and on hawks shall ye 'scape from the toil, shall ye win
the prize ?
Away !—let the deeds of war no more in your hearts find place,
But the cunning in pleading that winneth a weakling maiden's grace ! '
Even so hot-hearted he spake ; and many of them that heard
Low murmured thereat ; howbeit none of them answered a word.
Then sat he down yet scowling in wrath ; and rose thereupon
Jason to stir them to deeds, and thus spake Aison's son :
'Let Argus be sent from the ship, seeing all commend this thing ;

But let us which remain from her hiding-place in the river bring
And openly moor to the shore our galley ; for now gone by 570
Is the time for hiding as cravens that cower from the onset-cry.'
So did he speak : and he hasted the feet of Argus again
To return to the city with speed, and the hawsers drew they then
Out of the stream inboard at Aison's son's command ;
And a little above the backwater rowed they the galley aland.
But Aiêtes assembled for council the Kolchian men in haste
Aloof from his halls, in the place where they gathered in days overpast,
Devising against the Minyans trouble and treachery grim.
And he purposed, so soon as the bulls should have torn him limb from limb,—
This man who had taken upon him the heavy task to fulfil,— 580
To hew the oak-grove down that crested the shaggy hill,
And to burn the ship and her crew, that so amid fume and flame
They might vent that insolence forth for a king's defiance that came.
Yea, and he had not received, he said, even Aiolus' son
In his halls in his sorest need, even Phrixus, the man who outshone
All strangers in courtesy and in fear of the Gods on high,
But that Zeus' self sent unto him his messenger down from the sky,
Even Hermes, bidding him give to the stranger the welcoming hand.
How much less therefore, when pirate-rovers came to his land,
Should they long 'scape griefs of their own, the caitiffs whose only toil 590
Was to stretch forth their hands in the taking of other men's goods for a spoil,
And to weave dark webs of guile, and on herdmen folk to fall
With soul-dismaying shouts, and to harry steading and stall ?
Yea, and the sons of Phrixus should render to him therebeside
Meet penalty, they who had dared in returning thither to guide
Felons, consorting with men which were minded to drive even him
Light-hearted from honour and sceptre; as spake that prophecy grim,
The warning whereof he heard from his father the Sun erewhile,
Bidding him, 'See thou beware of thine offspring's secret guile,
And the plots of thy seed, and the curse of their crafty iniquity ;'

For which cause also he sent them, even as they craved, oversea,
By their father's behest, to Achaia a long way :—yet there came
On his soul no shadow of fear of his daughters, lest these should frame
Treason : no fear of his son Absyrtus his heart had chilled ;
But he said, 'In the children of Chalkiopê shall the curse be fulfilled.'
And bodings of awful revenge on the strangers foamed on his lip
In his fury ; for loudly he threatened to hale to the flames their ship
And her crew, that none through the meshes of ruin's net might slip.
But Argus had gone to the halls of Aiêtes the while, and with speech
Of manifold pleading now did the prince his mother beseech 610
To pray to Medea to help them ; yea, and herself theretofore
Was full of the selfsame thought, but the fear on her soul lay sore
Lest haply fate should withstand, and in vain she should speak her fair,
For her dread of her father's deadly wrath ; or if to her prayer
She should yield, yet all should be brought to light, and her deeds laid bare.

Now the maiden had cast her down on her couch, and slumber deep
Of her anguish relieved her ; but straightway dreams came haunting her sleep,
Such visions dark and deceitful as trouble the anguish-distraught.
For it seemed that the stranger had taken upon him the task ; but she thought
That it was not the Fleece of the Ram that he longed to win for 620 a prize,
Nor yet for the sake of this had he fared in any wise
To Aiêtes' city, but only to lead her, his wedded wife,
Unto his home ; and she dreamed that herself did wrestle in strife
With the bulls, and exceeding lightly the mighty labour she wrought.
Howbeit thereafter her parents set their promise at naught,
For that not to their child, but to him, was the challenge to yoke that team.
Wherefore contention of wrangling clashed through her troubled dream
'Twixt her sire and the strangers : and lo, in her hand the decision they laid,

That the issue should follow her will, and the thoughts of the heart of the maid.
And straightway the stranger she chose: all reverence thrust she aside 630
For her parents; and measureless anguish seized them, and loud they cried
In their fury, and sleep forsook her at that heart-thrilling sound.
And all a-quiver with fear she upstarted: she stared all round
On the walls of her chamber; her fluttering spirit back to her breast
Scarce drew she: the words like a panic-struck throng through her pale lips pressed:
'O wretched I!—how nightmare visions my spirit appal!
I fear me lest awful ills from the heroes' voyage befall:
And my heart, my heart for the stranger is tossed in a storm of dismay.
Let him woo some girl in his own Achaia far away,
And be maidenhood mine, and mine in the house of my parents to stay! 640
Yet—yet—though mine heart be by love made reckless, the desperate deed
I will try not unbid by my sister—never!—except she plead
With Medea to help in the toil, in her anguish of fear for the sake
Of her sons: this might peradventure assuage my sore heart-ache.'
She spake, and she rose from her bed, and she opened her chamber door
Barefooted, in vesture of linen alone; and she yearned full sore
To go to her sister, and over the threshold stole the maid:
Yet lingering—lingering—long at the door of the chamber she stayed
Held by her shame. Then backward in sudden panic she fled,
And into her bower she darted, and shrank to the shadows in dread. 650
And backward and forward her purposeless feet ever paced in vain;
For whenso she braced her to go, shame fettered her feet with its chain,
And ever as shame plucked back, bold passion spurred her amain.
Thrice she essayed, thrice stayed she; but now at the fourth essay
Down on her bed on her face did she cast her, and writhing she lay.
And as when some bride in her desolate bower for her lord maketh moan,

Unto whom her brethren and parents espoused her a little agone;
And for shame and for thinking on him awhile she cannot face
The eyes of her handmaids, but silent she sits in a secret place.
Some doom hath destroyed him, or ever the crown of their desire 660
Was attained of these: and there in her chamber, with heart on fire
Stilly she sitteth and weepeth, beholding her couch left lorn;
Stilly—for fear of the mock of the women, the laugh of their scorn.
Like her did Medea make moan: but with sob and with broken cry
While yet she lamented, it chanced one heard as she passed thereby,
Which had been from a child a handmaid tending her lady's bower
So she told it to Chalkiopê: now she sat in the selfsame hour
With her sons, devising to win her sister to help their need;
And she hearkened the strange tale told of the handmaid with diligent heed,
Neither put it lightly aside; but she hastened in startled dismay 670
Forth of her bower and on to the bower where the maiden lay
Anguish-racked, while her frenzied fingers tore each cheek.
And her eyes all drowned in tears she beheld, and thus did she speak:
'Ah me, Medea, ah me!—and why art thou weeping so?
What hath befallen?—how came to thine heart this terrible woe?
Is it some disease heaven-sent that hath suddenly smitten thy frame?
Or what, hast thou heard some deadly threat from our father that came
Touching me and my sons? Would God I had never so much as seen
My parents' home, nor the town, but my dwelling afar had been
At the ends of the earth, where never was heard the Kolchian 680 name!'
She spake: but Medea's cheeks flushed crimson; and maiden shame
From the answer she yearned full sore to render withheld her long.
And now was the word awake, and fluttered upon her tongue,
And backward anon to her breast it flew like a startled bird.
And often she parted her lovely lips to utter the word;
Yet fainted her voice on the threshold of speech: but at last of her guile

Thus spake she—and ever the bold Loves thrust her onward the while:
'O Chalkiopê, mine heart [illegible]thy sons is disquieted sore,
Lest my father destroy them [illegible]hright with the men from the alien shore;
So ghastly a dream, while a mo[illegible]nt I slumbered, but now did I see— 690
And oh may the Gods forefend that the vision accomplished should be,
Forbid that thy love for thy sons should be made heart-anguish to thee!'
So spake she, proving her sister, longing to hear her pray,
Unprompted of her, for her help for her sons in the evil day.
Strong anguish swept o'er the mother's soul like a surging tide,
For her terror at that she had heard, and with fervent beseeching she cried:
'Yea, and to this same end did I come with eager speed,
If with me thou wouldst haply devise and prepare some help for our need.
But swear thou by Earth and by Heaven that thou wilt conceal in thine heart
Whatsoever I say unto thee, and wilt bear therein thy part. 700
By the Blessèd I pray thee, by thine own soul, by thy parents' name,
That thou see not my sons in torment destroyed by a doom of shame
Horribly: else with my dear-loved sons will I die, and come
A hateful vengeance-spirit to haunt thee from Hades' home!'
So spake she, and straightway gushed her tears in torrent flow;
And around her knees did she fling her arms in a passion of woe,
And adown on her bosom she bowed her head; and there they two
Over each other made piteous lament, and the dim halls through
Went wailing low the sound of anguished women's cry.
And to her disquieted sorely Medea made reply: 710
'God help thee!—what healing can I bring thee?—what talk is thine
Of horrible curses and vengeance-spirits!—would God it were mine,
Mine by a power firm-stablished, to save thy sons from bane!
Be witness—the mighty oath of the Kolchians, the oath thou art fain

I should swear—be witness the broad-arched Heaven, and the Earth below,
Mother of Gods, that, so far as the bounds of my strength may go,
I will fail thee not, if thy prayer be a boon that man may bestow.'
So spake she, and Chalkiopê made answer to her, and she said:
'Now couldst thou not dare for the stranger—himself too asketh thine aid—
By wile or by wisdom achievement of this emprise to win 720
For the sake of my sons? Lo, now is his messenger Argus within,
Praying that I would essay to win for them help of thy grace.
In the mid-court left I him when I came to seek thy face.'
So spake she, and bounded within her Medea's heart for delight:
Her fair skin suddenly crimsoned, and swam before her sight
A mist, as she flushed and burned; and answer she made thereunto:
'Chalkiopê, according to that which is pleasing to you,
Even so will I do. May I see with mine eyes the dawn not again,
Nor mayst thou behold me long in the land of living men,
If I count aught dearer to me than the lives of thee and thine, 730
Even thy sons: for verily these be brethren mine,
My kinsmen belovèd, my childhood-playmates: myself I call
Thine own, own sister, my sister's own little daughter withal,
Since even as them the baby me to thy breast didst thou hold:
So still have I heard the tale by the lips of my mother told.
But go thou, in silence bury this my kindness, that so
I may work out unwares to my parents my promise. At dawn will I go
Unto Hekatê's fane, to bear thither the drugs that shall cast a spell
On the bulls for the stranger for whose sake all this strife befell.'
So the mother returned from the chamber, and spake to her 740 sons full fain
Of her sister's help. But now did the tide of shame again
And of terrible fear o'er the soul of Medea in solitude rise,
That she in her sire's despite for a man such deeds should devise.
Then night drew darkness over the earth; on the lonely sea
The sailors gazed from their ships on the Bear and the flashing three
Of Orion; and came upon every wayfarer longing for sleep,

And on each gate-warder ; and mothers, that daylong wont to weep
For children dead, with the peace of slumber were folded around.
No barking of dogs through the city there was any more, no sound
Of voices, but all the blackening gloom was with silence bound. 750
But not o'er Medea did sleep sweet dews of forgetfulness shake ;
For many a care in her yearning for Jason held her awake,
Adread of the mighty strength of the bulls, 'neath the fury of whom
He must die in the War-god's acre, must die by a shameful doom.
And with thick fast throbbings struggled the heart in her breast alway ;
As when on the wall of a dwelling the leaping sunbeams play
Flung up from the water that into a caldron but now fell plashing,
Or into a pail, and hither and thither the sunbeam flashing
In lightning eddy and flicker is dancing in mad unrest,
So quivered and fluttered the heart within the maiden's breast. 760
And the tears from her eyes were flowing for ruth, and through all her frame
Like a smouldering fire her anguish burned, and coiled its flame
Round every fine-strung nerve, and thrilled to her beating brain
Where sharpest of all the pang strikes in, when the shafts of pain
Are shot to the heart by the Loves that rest them never from harm.
And now did she say that the drugs she would give that should bind with a charm
The bulls, and now would she not, but with him would she cease to live.
Swift changed her mood : she would not die, she, nor the drugs would she give,
But in silence endure her fate, the curse that was doomed to betide.
Then, there as she sat, she wavered this way and that, and she cried : 770
'Oh hapless I, whether this way or that into ruin I fall !
On every hand is despair for my soul : no help is at all
From woe, but it burneth, a furnace unquenchèd !—would God it had been
Mine to be slain ere this by the shafts of the Huntress-queen,
Or ever I saw him, or came to Achaia-land the sons
Of Chalkiopê, whom a God, or the awful Avenging Ones
Hither, for sorrow to us, and for many a tear, have led !

—Let him perish amidst of the struggle, if this be his weird, to be sped
On the fallows of doom!—for how shall I 'scape my parents' ken
As the drugs I prepare? With what manner of words shall I 780 blind them then?
What wile, what cunning device for mine hero's help shall I find?
If I see him apart from his friends, shall I meet him with greeting kind?
O ill-starred!—though he should die, yet cannot I hope that so
Assuaging should come of my pain: nay, this should be but for my woe
If he of his life were bereft—oh, get thee behind me, shame!
Beauty, avaunt!—So scatheless by mine endeavour he came
Out of peril, then might he fare wheresoever seemeth him best.
But for me—on the selfsame day when triumphant he bideth the test,
Then let me die, from the rafters straining my neck in the noose,
Or tasting of poisons that rend the soul from the body loose. 790
Ah, but after my dying!—what scoffs and what mocks will they fling
On my grave!—and far and near how every city will ring
With the tale of my doom; and from lip to lip shall be tossed the jeer,
And a mock shall I be in the mouths of the daughters of Kolchis that sneer,
"Lo, she that so lovingly cared for a man of an alien race
That she died!—lo, she that on home and on parents heaped disgrace,
Giving reins to her lust!" What shame should not be loaded on me?
Ah me, my infatuate folly!—better by far should it be
In this same night to forsake my life these chambers within
By a fate of mystery, 'scaping from slander's fiendish din, 800
Or ever that hideous befouling, that nameless defilement, I win!'
She spake, and she rose, and a casket she brought, wherein there lay
Many a drug, some helpful to heal, some mighty to slay.
On her knees she laid it, and brake into weeping: her bosom-fold
Was wet with her tears; from the wounds unstanched of her heart they rolled,
As she bitterly wailed for her fate: and her soul was exceeding fain
To choose her a murderous drug, and to taste oblivion of pain.
And the eager fingers now of the hapless maid 'gan part

The bands of the casket, to take it forth—but, with sudden start,
With an awful fear of Hades the hateful shuddered her heart. 810
Long spellbound sat she in speechless horror : around her thronged
Visions of all sweet things for the which through life she had longed.
She thought of the hours delightsome the lot of the living that fill,
And she thought of her merry playmates, even as a maiden will.
And sweeter than ever was grown the sun unto her to behold—
No marvel, seeing she yearned for all so passionate-souled !
So she put from her knees the casket, and laid it down again
All changed by the promptings of Hêrê : no more did she waver then
In her purpose ; but now did she long for the dawning with speed to awake,
For the dayspring to rise, that so to her hero the drugs she might take 820
For the spell, as her covenant pledged her, and meet him face to face.
And many a time she unbarred the doors of her chamber, to gaze
Forth for the far faint gleam, and welcome flashed upon her
The Child of the Mist, and throughout the city the folk 'gan stir.
Then Argus spake to his brethren, bidding them there to abide
To learn the mind of the maiden, and how should her purpose betide ;
But himself turned backward again, and unto the galley he hied.
Now soon as the maiden beheld the splendour of dawn outrolled
O'er the heavens, gathered she up with her hands her tresses of gold,
Which over her shoulders in careless disarray hung loose : 830
And she bathed her feverish cheeks, and with perfume shed from the cruse
All nectar-scented her body shone ; and a robe fair-wrought
She donned, and with brooches cunningly-fashioned its folds upcaught.
And the cloud of a veil did she cast o'er her head unearthly fair,
And as silver it shimmered : she trode the floors of the palace there
Pacing unfaltering to and fro, forgetful of all
Those heaven-sent woes at the door, and of others that yet should befall.
And she summoned her bower-maidens ; twelve by tale were they :
Through the night at the entering-in of her odorous chamber they lay,
Young as herself, nor yet on the bridal couch embraced.

And these she commanded to harness the mules to the wain in haste
To bear their lady to Hekatê's passing-beautiful fane.
Wherefore the bower-maidens hasted and harnessed the mules to the wain.
And Medea the while took forth from the casket a drug of might,
The magic root that they say is the Herb of Prometheus hight.
For if any with midnight sacrifice upon Daira shall call,
The only-begotten, and smear his body therewithal,
No stroke of brazen weapon shall wound the flesh of him,
No, nor from blazing fire shall he flinch; but his strength of limb
And his prowess throughout that day shall all their might confound. 850
First-born it upshot from the clod in the hour when dropped to the ground
From the ravening eagle's beak, where the crags of Caucasus frowned,
The ichor, the blood of a God, of Prometheus in torments bound.
And the flower of it blossomed a cubit the face of the earth above:
As the glow of the crocus Corycian, so was the hue thereof,
Upborne upon pale stalks twain, and below in its earthy bed
The root thereof as flesh new-severed was crimson-red.
And the blood thereof, like a mountain-oak's dark sap, in a shell
From Caspian strand she gathered, to weave thereof a spell,
When seven times she had bathed her in waters unresting that glide, 860
And seven times upon Brimo the Nursing-mother had cried—
Night-wandering Brimo, the Underworld Goddess, the Queen of the dead—
And in dusky vesture clad through the blackness of night did she tread.
And the dark earth shuddered and quaked deep down with muttering moan,
As the Titan root was severed; yea, and Iapetus' son
In frenzy of heart-wringing agony groaned a fearful groan.
This, from the casket ta'en, in her odorous girdle she laid,
The girdle enclasping the waist divinely sweet of the maid.
Then forth of the portal she paced, and she set her foot on the wain,
And beside her went upon either hand bower-maidens twain. 870
To her left hand gave they the reins, and the fair-fashioned whip hath she ta'en

In her right; and adown through the city she drave; and the rest of the train
Of her handmaids laid their hands on the wain, behind it to run
Adown the highway broad, for their tunics delicate-spun
Each maiden had kilted up above her ivory knee.
'Twas as when, where Parthenius' soft-flowing ripples slide through the lea,
Or as when, coming up from her bath in Amnisus' crystalline water,
High-borne on her golden chariot rideth Latona's Daughter,
Driving betwixt the hills the fleetfoot roes of her car,
To greet the sacrifice-steam of a hecatomb afar; 880
And the Nymphs in throngs upon throngs attend her, gathering some
By the green well-head of Amnisus' self, and others that come
By the glens and the fountain-flashing heights; and fawn and whine
The cowering beasts, as onward cometh the presence divine:
So through the city they sped, and to this side and that of the street
The people made way, neither dared they the eyes of the princess to meet.
But when she had left behind her the city's fair-paved ways,
And was now drawn nigh, as she drave through the plain, to the holy place,
Then from the smooth-running wain she stept to the earth straightway
In haste; and unto her maidens thus did Medea say: 890
'O friends, I have verily grievously sinned, for I took no thought
To have nought to do with the strangers whose wandering feet have sought
Our land:—lo now, with amazement's perplexity smitten sore
Is all the city, that none of the women, which heretofore
Hitherward have assembled day by day, be now gathered here.
But seeing that we be come, and that none beside draweth near,
Come then, with delightsome song without stint or stay let us sing
To our soul's satisfying, and pluck we the lovely flowers that spring
Mid the tender grass; and in this same hour on the homeward way
Will we wend. Ye also with many a gift shall return this day 900
Homeward, if now with mine heart's desire ye will gladden me.

For the pleading of Argus prevaileth with me, and of Chalkiopê:—
But hide in your hearts that ye hear from me; let your lips be dumb,
Lest to my father's ears peradventure the story should come:—
They beseech me to take rich gifts, and to save in his emprise fell
Yon stranger who took it upon him the might of the bulls to quell.
Yea, and their counsel was good in mine eyes, that I bade him appear
In my presence this day, alone, with none of his comrades near,
That we may divide those presents amongst us, if haply he bring
The gifts in his hand, and may give him a spell-drug, a balefuller thing 910
Than the strength of the bulls. But stand ye aloof when he draweth anigh.'
So spake she, and pleased them all her counsel of subtlety.
Now Argus apart from his comrades had sundered Aison's son,
So soon as he heard from his brethren how that Medea had gone
Forth in the misty dawning to fare unto Hekatê's fane;
And over the plain did he lead him, and Mopsus companioned the twain,
Ampykus' son, most wise to interpret the tokens aright
Of the coming of birds, and the signs to discern of their parting flight.
Never yet had there been such a man in the days of the men of old—
Nor of them of the lineage of Zeus, nor the champions hero-souled 920
Which sprang from the blood of the rest of the Gods that endure for aye—
Such a man as the bride of Zeus made Jason to be that day
In glory of bodily presence, in witchery of his tongue.
And ever his comrades gazing upon him in wonderment hung
On his radiance of manifold grace: and glad for the way they should wend
Waxed Ampykus' son, as foreboding, I trow, how all should end.
Now there is by the path through the plain, as ye draw to the temple anigh,
A poplar that waveth his tresses of countless leaves on high;
And thereon had the crows ever-babbling pitched as it were their tent,
Whereof one, clapping her pinions, beneath her as these twain went, 930
The counsel of Hêrê chanted, mid high boughs swayed to and fro:

'Lo there, what a pitiful seer!—even that which the children know
His wit can in no wise conceive, how that no word sweet and dear
Maiden will murmur to man, while strangers be loitering near!
Avaunt, vile prophet and witless!—on thee not the Cyprian Queen,
On thee not the gentle Loves of their kindness are breathing, I ween!'
So ceased the voice of her chiding, and Mopsus smiled to hear
The heaven-sent cry of the bird, and spake to the heroes the seer:
'Now pass thou on to the Goddess's temple: therein shalt thou find
The maiden, O Aison's son: thou shalt prove her passing kind 940
By the promptings of Kypris, who also thine helper shall be in thy toil,
Even as prophesied Phineus, Agênor's son, erewhile.
But we twain, Argus and I, thy coming again will abide
Aloof, yea, in this same place: but thou, with none beside,
With wise words plead with the maiden, and win her thy will to do.'
So in his wisdom he spake, and the others consented thereto.
But Medea—her thoughts unto nought else turned, upon nought could be stayed,
Howsoever she sang—but never a song, howsoe'er she essayed,
Pleased her, that long its melody winged her feet for the dance;
But ever she faltered amidst them, her eyes ever wandered askance 950
Away from the throng of her maidens unresting; and over the ways,
Turning aside her cheeks, far off ever strained she her gaze.
O the heart in her breast oft fainted, whenever in fancy she heard
Fleet past her the sound of a footfall, the breath of a breeze as it stirred.
But it was not long ere the hero appeared to her yearning eyes
Stately striding, as out of the ocean doth Sirius uprise,
Who climbeth the sky most glorious and clear to discern from afar,
But unto the flocks for measureless mischief a baleful star:
Even so came Aison's son to the maiden glorious to see,—
But with Jason's appearing dawned on her troublous misery.

Then it seemed as her heart dropped out of her bosom; a dark mist came
Over her eyes, and hot in her cheeks did the blushes flame.
Nor backward nor forward a step could she stir: all strength was gone
From her knees; and her feet to the earth seemed rooted; and one after one
Her handmaidens all drew back, and with him was she left alone.
So these twain stood—all stirless and wordless stood face to face:
As oaks they seemed, or as pines upsoaring in stately grace,
Which side by side all still mid the mountains rooted stand
When winds are hushed; but by breath of the breeze when at last they are fanned,
Stir they with multitudinous murmur and sigh—so they 970
By love's breath stirred were to pour out all in their hearts that lay.
Then Aison's son beheld how the maiden's soul was adread
With wilderment heaven-sent, and kindly-courteous he said:
'Wherefore, O maiden, dost fear me so sorely, alone as I am?
Never was I as the loud-tongued blusterers, void of shame,
No, not when aforetime I dwelt in my fatherland oversea:
Wherefore be thou not, maiden, over-abashed before me,
That thou shouldst not inquire whatsoever thou wilt, or utter thy mind.
But, seeing we twain be met with friendly hearts and kind
In a place where sin is of heaven accurst, in a hallowed spot, 980
Speak thou, and question withal as thou wilt: but beguile me not
With pleasant words, forasmuch as thou gavest thy promise erewhile
To thy sister, to give me the charm that I long for, the herbs of guile.
I beseech thee in Hekatê's name—for the sake of thy parents I pray,
And of Zeus, that o'er stranger and suppliant stretcheth his hand alway!
Lo, a suppliant am I, a stranger withal, which am come to thee here,
In sore straits bending the knee; for in this my task of fear
Shall I nowise prevail, except I be holpen of thine and thee.
And to thee will I render requital of thanks in the days to be—
As is meet and right for them in a far-away land which dwell— 990

Making glorious thy name and thy fame, and mine hero-companions
shall tell
The story of thy renown, when to Hellas again they have won;
Yea, and the heroes' wives and mothers, who now make moan
For us, I ween, on the strand as they sit by the sighing brine:
And to scatter in air their bitter affliction is thine—is thine!
Not I were the first—was Theseus not saved from the ordeal grim
By Minos' child for her kindness' sake which she bare unto him,
Ariadne, born of the Sun-god's daughter Pasiphaê?
But she, when slumbered the wrath of Minos, over the sea
Sailed with the hero, forsaking her land. The Immortals divine 1000
Loved well that maid: in the midst of the firmament set is her sign,
A crown of stars, which they name Ariadne's diadem,
All night circling amidst of the signs that the heavens begem.
Thou also shalt have of the Gods like thanks, if thou shalt redeem
From destruction so goodly a host of heroes—ah, needs must it seem
That through form so lovely as thine should the beauty of kindness
beam!'
Extolling her so spake he; and her eyelids drooped, while played
A nectar-smile on her lips; and melted the heart of the maid
By his praising uplifted: her eyes are a moment upraised to his eyes,
And all speech faileth: no word at the first to her lips may rise; 1010
But in one breath yearned she to speak forth all her joy and her pain.
And with hand ungrudging forth from her odorous zone hath she
ta'en
The charm, and he straightway received it into his hands full fain.
Yea, now would she even have drawn forth all her soul from her
breast,
And had laid it with joy in his hands for her gift, had he made request,
So wondrously now from the golden head of Aison's son
Did Love out-lighten the witchery-flame; and her sweet eyes shone
With the gleam that he stole therefrom, and her heart glowed
through and through
Melting for rapture away, from the lips of the rose as the dew
At the sun's kiss melteth away, when the dayspring is kindled anew, 1020
And these twain now on the earth were fixing their eyes abashed,

And anon yet again their glances each on the other they flashed,
As with radiant eyelids they smiled a heart-beguiling smile:
And bespake him the maiden at last, yet scarce after all this while:
'Give thou heed now, that my counsel may haply be for thine aid.
What time at thy coming my father within thine hands shall have laid
The crop of the serpent's jaws for thy sowing, the teeth of bane,
Then shalt thou watch for the hour when the night is sundered in twain.
Then thou, when first in the river's tireless flow thou hast bathed,
Alone, with none other beside thee, in night-hued vesture swathed, 1030
Shalt dig thee a rounded pit, and over the dark earth-bowl
Shalt thou slaughter a ewe, and shalt burn the unsevered carcase whole
On a pyre, the which on the very brink of the pit thou hast piled,
And propitiate only-begotten Hekatê, Perseus' child,
Out of a chalice pouring the hive-stored toil of the bee.
So when thou hast sought the grace of the Goddess heedfully,
Then turn thee to pass from the pyre, and beware lest any sound
Or of footfalls behind thee startle thee, so that thou turn thee round,
Or of baying of hounds, lest all that is wrought be undone thereby,
And thyself to thine hero-companions never again draw nigh. 1040
And in water at dawn shalt thou steep this herb, and thy limbs shalt thou bare,
And even as with oil shalt anoint thee therewith; and prowess there
Shalt thou find, and strength exceeding great: thou wouldst nowise say
That with men thou couldst match thee in might, but with Gods that abide for aye.
Therewithal be thy lance and thy buckler besprent with the magic dew,
And thy sword: then shall not the spear-heads prevail to pierce thee through
Of the Earth-born men, nor the fiery breath of the bulls of bane
Unendurably darting. Yet no long time shalt thou thus remain,
But only for that same day: notwithstanding flinch not thou
From the toil; and another thing yet for thine help will I tell to 1050
thee now:

So soon as the mighty bulls thou hast yoked, and by manifold toil
And by strength of thine hands hast sped the share through the stubborn soil,
And adown the furrows the bristling harvest of giants shall stand,
Where fell on the dusky clods the serpent's teeth from thine hand,
Even as thou mark'st them in throngs through the fallows upbursting to day,
Cast thou in their midst unawares a massy stone: and they,
As ravening hounds o'er a gobbet of flesh that wrangle, shall slay
Each one his fellow: thou also in battle-fury shalt fall
On the rout. So the Golden Fleece unto Hellas, if this be all,
From Aia afar shalt thou bear:—O yea, turn thou and depart 1060
Whithersoever it pleaseth thee: seek the desire of thine heart!'
She spake, and her eyes to the earth at her feet in silence she cast;
And her cheeks divinely fair were wet as her tears fell fast,
As she sorrowed because that far and afar from her side o'er the main
He must wander away. And she looked in his eyes, and she spake yet again
With mournful word, and his right hand now hath she ta'en in her own;
For the shamefastness now from her eyes on the wings of love had flown:

'But O remember, if ever thou com'st to thine home afar,
Medea's name: and in like wise I, when sundered we are,
Will forget thee not. But tell, of thy good will, where is thine home, 1070
Whitherward bound thou wilt fare in thy galley over the foam.
Is it unto Orchomenus' wealthy burg that thy feet shall go?
Or anigh to Aiaia's isle? Of the maiden fain would I know,
Some maiden far-renowned, whom thou namedst the daughter, I wis,
Of Pasiphaë: kinswoman unto my sire that lady is.'

So did she speak; and over him stole, as the maiden wept,
Love the victorious; and answering speech to his lips hath leapt:

'Yea, verily, never by night, I ween, and by day nevermore
Shalt thou be forgotten of me, if unto Achaia's shore
Unscathed I shall 'scape indeed, and Aiêtes before me set,
For mine hands to achieve, none other toil more desperate yet.

But if this hath pleased thee, to learn what land I call mine own,
I will tell thee—yea, and mine own heart biddeth me make it known
A country there is—steep mountain-ramparts around it run—
A land of streams and of pastures, wherein Iapetus' son,
Even Prometheus, begat the valiant Deukalion,
Who of all men was first that builded a city, or reared a fane
To the Deathless, and first was he of the kings over men that reign.
That land do the folk that around it dwell Haimonia call.
Therein is my city Iolkos found: therein withal
Stand many beside, where not so much have they heard as the name
Of Aiaia's isle: but rumour hath told how Minyas came
Thereout, even Minyas Aiolus' son, and builded the town
Of Orchomenus; over the marches Kadmeian her towers look down.
Yet why should I speak things vain as the wild winds' empty sound
Of our home, of the daughter of Minos, the princess far-renowned
Ariadne—the glorious name whereby that heart's desire
Was called among men, the maiden of whom thou dost inquire?
Would God that, even as Minos his heart unto Theseus inclined
For her sake, so would thy father with me be in friendship joined!'
So spake he, with tender words and caressing the maiden to woo.
But anguish exceeding bitter was thrilling the heart of her through:
And in sorrow of spirit with vehement words she made reply:
'O haply in Hellas 'tis good to be heedful of friendship's tie:
But Aiêtes is not such a man among men as thou saidst but now
Was Minos, Pasiphaê's lord; and with Ariadne, I trow,
May I nowise compare me: wherefore of guest-love speak not thou.
Only remember thou me, when safe thou hast sped thy flight
To Iolkos; and I will remember—yea, in my parents' despite
Will remember thee: and from far may a rumour come unto me,
Or a messenger-bird with the tidings, when I am forgotten of thee!
Or me, even me, may the swift-winged blasts from the earth's breast tear,
And away hence over the sea to the land of Iolkos bear,

That so I might cast reproaches on thee, yea, unto thy face,
And remind thee that all by mine help thou escapedst—but oh that my place
That day were of right in thine halls, the place of a queen at the board!'

So spake she, and down her cheeks the piteous tears aye poured.
But he caught up her words even there, and with comforting speech did he say:

'O stricken one, leave thou the empty blasts at their will to stray,
And the messenger-bird to roam, for thy words are but vanity! 1120
But if ever thou come unto those abodes, if Hellas thou see,
Honour and worship of men and of women then shall be thine;
Yea, they shall reverence thee as a very presence divine,
Because that again to their homes did the sons of the Hellenes win
By thy devising, yea, and the brethren of these, and their kin;
And many a stalwart husband of thee hath received his life.
Then shalt thou enter the bridal bower with me—my wife;
And nothing shall come between our love, and nothing shall sunder,
Till death's shroud fold us around, and our hearts are chilled thereunder.'

He spake, and to hear him her soul was melted within her then: 1130
Yet she shuddered to see the deeds whose end was beyond her ken.
Ah hapless!—not long was she doomed to refuse a home in the land
Of Hellas, for hereunto was she guided of Hêrê's hand,
To the end that for Pelias' bane Aiaian Medea might come
Unto Iolkos the hallowed, forsaking her fatherland-home.

But by this from afar were the handmaids glancing towards these twain
Full oft in disquiet; for need was now, as the day 'gan wane,
That the maiden unto her mother should turn her homeward again.
But she thought not yet of departing, such joy did her spirit take
Alike in his goodlihead, and the winsome words that he spake. 1140
But Aison's son took heed, and late and at last did he say:

'Lo now, it is time to depart, lest the sun's light fade away
Before we be ware, and lest some stranger should haply espy
All this. Yet again will we meet, coming hitherward, thou and I.'

So in sweetest communion did these try each the other's heart
Thus far; and thereafter they sundered. And now did Jason depart
Unto his friends and the ship, while his heart for joy beat high;
And she to her handmaids, and all in a troop did these draw nigh
To meet her: she marked them not, as unto her side they drew;
For her soul to the clouds had soared far up 'twixt earth and the blue. 1150
And with feet that moved in a dream she mounted the fleet-running wain:
In her left hand grasped she the reins, in her right the whip hath she ta'en
Curious-fashioned, to drive the mules; and fast did they flee,
As on to the city they sped and the palace; and Chalkiopê
'Gan ask her of all that befell, for her sons' sake anguish-stirred;
But rapt in a trance of thoughts back-drifting she heard not a word,
And to all that eager questioning never a word she said:
But adown on a lowly stool did she sit at the foot of the bed,
On her left hand propping her cheek as she wearily drooped aside;
And with tears were her eyes brimming over, as surged the dark chill tide 1160
Of remembrance of emprise dread that the covenant bound her to bide.
Now when Aison's son had wended aback to the place where stayed
His comrades, what time he had left them in faring to meet the maid.
Then, telling them all the story the while, with these did he hie
To the throng of the heroes; and now to the galley drew they anigh.
And they saw him, and lovingly greeted, and asked him of all that befell:
And he in the midst of them all did the maiden's counsels tell;
And he showed them the dread spell-drug. One only of all sat apart,
Idas, nursing his wrath: but the others with joyful heart
Turned them, when darkness fell, their hands from their labour to stay, 1170

And in great peace laid them down to their rest: but with dawning day
To Aiêtes, to ask for the seed of the serpent, sent they away
Two men; and foremost Telamon Arês-beloved they sent,
And Aithalides, glorious scion of Hermes, beside him went.
So went they, and not for nought, for to these at their coming were given
Of Aiêtes the king the teeth for the grim strife hard to be striven,
The teeth of the dragon Aonian, that, seeking the wide world through
For Europa, Kadmus found in Ogygian Thêbê, and slew,
The monster that lurked, a warder, beside the Aretian spring.
There also he dwelt, by the heifer led, which Apollo the king 1180
By the word of prophecy gave for his guide, that he should not stray.
These teeth did Tritonis the Goddess tear from its jawbone away,
And the gift on Aiêtes and him that had slain the beast she bestowed.
On the plain Aonian Kadmus the teeth of the serpent sowed;
And an earth-born nation was founded there of Agênor's son,
The remnant left when the harvest of Arês' spear was done.
So the teeth to bear to the galley Aiêtes gave full fain,
For he weened that to win to the goal of his task he should strive in vain,
Yea, though to the yoking of those dread bulls he should haply attain.
And the sun down under the dark earth far away in the west, 1190
Beyond the uttermost hills of the Aethiops, sank to his rest;
And the Night was laying her yoke on the necks of her steeds. Then spread
On the shore by the hawsers of Argo the heroes each his bed.
But Jason, so soon as the flashing stars of the circling Bear
Had set, and under the firmament hushed was all the air,
Unto the wilderness even as a thief all stealthily hied
With whatso was needful; for all had he taken thought to provide
In the day: and fared with him Argus, and milk from the flock he bore,

And a ewe therewithal; for these had he ta'en from the galley's store.
But when he beheld the place, which was far aloof from the tread 1200
Of men, where under the unscreened sky the clear meads spread,
There first of all in the flow of the sacred river he bathed
His limbs full reverently, and all his body he swathed
In a dark-hued cloak, which Hypsipylê, daughter of Lemnos' race,
Gave him aforetime, memorial of many a loving embrace.
Thereafter he digged him a pit in the plain of a cubit wide,
And the billets he heaped, and the lamb's throat cut by the dark pit's side.
And the carcase he stretched on the pile, and he thrust thereunder the fire
And kindled the brands, and mingled libations he poured on the pyre,
Calling on Hekatê Brimo to draw for his helper nigh. 1210
And when he had called on her, backward he fared, and she hearkened his cry.
Out of nethermost caverns of darkness the Awful Queen drew near
To the Aisonid's sacrifice, and about her did shapes of fear,
Even serpents, in horrible wreaths and knots, mid the oak-boughs hang:
And flashed a fitful splendour of torches unnumbered; and rang
Around her wild and high the baying of hounds of hell.
And all the meadow-land trembled under her tread; and the yell
Pealed of the marish-haunting Nymphs of the river, that dance
In the pastures wherethrough Amaryntian Phasis' ripples glance.
And terror gat hold upon Aison's son; but, for all his dread, 1220
Yet he turned him not round as his feet thence bore him, until he had sped
Back to his friends: and by this over Caucasus' snow-flecked height,
As she rose, was the Dawn mist-cradled shooting her shafts of light.
And now did Aiêtes array in the corslet of stubborn mould
His breast, the corslet that Arês gave, in the day when rolled
Mimas of Phlegra beneath his hands in the dust of doom.
And he set on his head the golden helmet of fourfold plume

Flaming like to the world-encompassing sun's red gleam,
When first in the dawning he leapeth up from the Ocean-stream.
He uplifted his manifold-plated shield, and he grasped in his hand 1230
His terrible spear and resistless: was none that before it might stand
Of the rest of the heroes, since Herakles now they had left afar:
He only against it had matched his might in the shock of war.
And his fair-fashioned chariot of fleet-footed steeds was stayed for the king
By Phaethon hard by; then to the chariot-floor did he spring;
And he drew through his fingers the reins, and forth of the city-gate
Drove he along the broad highway, by the lists of fate
To stand; and a countless multitude hastened forth at his side.
And as when to the Isthmian athlete-strife Poseidon doth ride
High-borne on his car, or Tainarus-wards, or to Lerna's mere, 1240
Or Hyantian Onchestus, the temple-grove that the nations revere;
And as when to Kalaurea oft-times his chariot-wheels have rolled,
And Haimonia's rock, and Geraistus' town that the forests enfold,
Even so was Aiêtes, lord of the Kolchian folk, to behold.
But Jason the while, obeying the rede from Medea that came,
In water hath steeped that drug; and he sprinkled his shield with the same,
And his sturdy spear and his sword; and his comrades with might and main
Made proof of his harness, thronging around: yet essayed they in vain
To bend that spear, though it were but a little; but evermore
Unyielding and stark it abode in their strong hands, even as before. 1250
But Idas, Aphareus' son—for with wrath was the heart of him black—
With his great sword hewed at the shaft by the butt; but the blade leapt back
As hammer from anvil, jarred by the shock; and a mighty shout
From the heroes rejoicing in hope of the trial's end rang out.
Thereafter his own limbs Jason sprinkled; and lo, he was filled
With terrible prowess, unspeakable, aweless; the hands of him thrilled

Tingling with strength, as waxed their sinews with gathering might.
And even as when a battle-steed afire for the fight
Leapeth and neigheth and paweth the ground, and glorying rears
His neck like a stormy-crested billow, and pricketh his ears, 1260
Even so in the pride of his prowess triumphant was Aison's son,
And hither and thither on high he bounded now and anon,
In his hands uptossing his brazen shield and his spear's tough ash.
Thou hadst said that adown through the murky welkin the leaping flash
Of the tempest-levin was gleaming and flickering once and again
From the clouds that are bringing hard after their burden of blackest rain.
Nor long time now would they tarry from faring forth to essay
The emprise, but row after row upon Argo's thwarts sat they,
And onward exceeding swiftly to Arês' plain they sped.
Overagainst the city so far before them it spread 1270
As the space from the start to the turning-post that the car must win
What time, when a king unto Hades hath passed, his princely kin
For hero and horse ordain the strife of the funeral game.
There found they Aiêtes, and other the tribes of the Kolchian name,
The folk on the cliffs Caucasian in lines far-stretching arrayed,
While the king by the winding brink of the river their coming stayed.
And Aison's son, when his comrades had made the hawsers fast,
Then with his spear and his shield to the mighty trial passed,
Bounding from Argo forth; and there was he bearing with him
His gleaming helm with the dragon's sharp teeth filled to the brim, 1280
With his brand on his shoulders slung, bare-limbed, and in some wise seeming
As Arês, in some wise Apollo the lord of the sword gold-gleaming.
O'er the fallow he glanced, and the brazen yoke of the bulls he espied.
And the plough, hewn solid of massy adamant, therebeside.
So he strode thereunto, and beside it his strong spear planted upright
On the butt-spike thereof, and leaning against it the morion he pight.
Then tracing the countless tracks of the bulls right on did he fare
With nought but his shield: but suddenly forth from an unseen lair,
From a den in the bowels of the earth, wherein was their grimly stall,

Whereover the lurid-gleaming smoke ever hung as a pall, 1290
Forth rushed they together as one, outbreathing the splendour of flame;
And the heroes quaked when they saw. But Jason, as onward they came,
Set wide his feet; and even as a rock in the sea doth abide
The charging surges whereon the scourging storm-blasts ride,
Before him he held to withstand them his shield; and the terrible twain
Their strong horns bellowing dashed against it with might and main:
Nevertheless by their onset they stirred him never a jot.
And even as when the armourers' bellows of stout hide wrought
In the piercèd melting-pot anon with murmur and sigh
Kindle the ravening flame, and anon doth the breath of them die; 1300
And an awful roar goeth up therefrom as the flames leap higher
From beneath, even so these twain outbreathing the rushing fire
Roared from their mouths, and about him as lightning leapt and played
The devouring blaze: yet warded him ever the spells of the maid.
Then grasped he the tip of the horn of the right-hand monster, and so
Mightily haled with his uttermost strength, till he bowed it low
To the brazen yoke, and, striking its hoof of brass with his foot,
Suddenly cast it adown on its knees, and its fellow brute,
Even as it charged him, with one thrust down on its knees did he throw.
Then his broad shield cast he away on the ground, and, to and fro 1310
To this side and that side striding, he kept them fall'n in their place
On their fore-knees, swiftly moving athwart the fervent blaze,
While marvelled the king at the hero's might. Then drew nigh two,
Even Tyndareus' sons—for that thus long since had he bidden them do;—
And they lifted and gave him the yoke on the necks of the bulls to be bound:
And deftly thereon did he bind it, and 'twixt them upraised from the ground
The brazen pole, and he made it fast by its pointed tip
Unto the yoke: and they twain back from the fire to the ship

Withdrew. Then he caught up again, and cast on his shoulders his shield
Behind him ; the helmet strong with the serpent's sharp teeth filled 1330
He grasped, and his spear resistless, wherewith, as a ploughman wight
Pricketh his oxen with goad Pelasgian, so did he smite
The flanks of the monsters, and starkly and steadily still did he hold
Unswerving the plough-heft cunningly fashioned of adamant mould.
But the bulls were raging the while with fury exceeding sore
Outbreathing the ravening splendour of fire : as that mad roar
Of the buffeting winds was the blast of their breath, when the seafarers quail
At their yelling above all else, and furl the straining sail.
Yet it was not long ere the beasts, as the stern spear bade them to toil,
Moved on, and behind them was broken the fallow's rugged soil 1335
Cloven apart by the might of the bulls and the ploughman strong.
And terribly crashed and groaned, the ploughshare's furrows along,
The clods uprent, of a man's load each, and with sturdy stride
Trampling the path the hero followed, and aye flung wide
The teeth of the serpent over the clods upheaved by the share,
Ever heedfully turning his head, lest haply, or e'er he was ware,
The harvest fell of the Earth-born against him should rise : and with strain
Of brazen hoofs on laboured the while that fearsome twain.
And it was so, that when the third part now was left of the day,
From the dawn as it waned, when the toil-forwearied labourers pray 1340
'O come to us, sweet unyoking-tide ! O tarry thou not ! '
Even then by the stalwart ploughman the fallowfield's earing was wrought,
For all it was ploughgates four; and the bulls from the yoke loosed he,
And with shouting and smiting he scared them over the plain to flee.
Then back toward Argo he hied him again, while yet all clear
Of the Earth-born brood the furrows he saw; and with cheer on cheer
His comrades hailed him and heartened. He plunged the brazen gleam
Of his helm mid the river's waters, and slaked his thirst from the stream.

Then bent he his knees till supple they grew; and he filled with might
His great heart, battle-aflame as a boar, when he whetteth for fight 1350
Against the hunters his tushes, and drippeth the plenteous froth
Down from his jaws to the ground, as he churneth their foam in his wrath.
Now by this was the harvest of Earth-born men over all that field
Upspringing; and all round bristled with thronging shield on shield
And with battle-spears twy-pointed, and morions glorious-gleaming
The garth of the death-dealing War-god: the splendour thereof upstreaming
Through the welkin lightened, and up to the heaven of heavens did it go.
And as when on the face of the earth hath fallen abundant snow,
And the wind-blasts chase the wintry clouds in scattered rout
Under the mirk of the night, and all the hosts shine out 1360
Of the stars through the darkness glittering; so those Earth-born men
Flashed, o'er the face of the ground upgrowing: but Jason then
Remembered the rede that Medea the cunning-hearted spake;
And a huge round boulder up from the earth in his grasp did he take—
A terrible quoit for Arês the War-god: there should not be found
Four stalwart men of strength to upraise it a span from the ground.
This caught he up in his hand, and afar with a leap did he throw
Into their midst, and behind his buckler himself crouched low
Awelessly. Loudly the Kolchians shouted—it rang as the roar
Of the shouting sea when his surges over the sharp reefs pour. 1370
But speechless amazement seized on Aiêtes at that vast sweep
Of the massy crag: and the Earth-born as fleetfoot hounds 'gan leap
Each on his fellow, and yelling they slew: the embattled lines
On their mother the earth, by their own spears slain, were falling, as pines
Or as oaks which the down-rushing blasts of the tempest have scourged and riven.
And even as leapeth a fiery star from the depths of the heaven,
Trailing behind him a splendour, a marvel to men which mark
How he darteth in shattering glories athwart the firmament's dark,
Even so seemed Aison's son on the Earth-born rushing: he bare

His sword from the scabbard outflashed; and here he smote them and there,
Mowing them down : full many on belly or flank did he smite
Which had won to the air waist-high, and some which had risen to light
But shoulder-high, and some as they stood but now upright,
And other some, even as their feet 'gan strain in the onset of fight.
And like as, when round the marches the war upstarteth from sleep,
A husbandman, fearing lest foemen the toil of his hands may reap,
Graspeth a curvèd sickle newly-whetted in hand,
And moweth in haste the crop yet green, neither letteth it stand
Until it be parched in the season due by the shafts of the sun ;
Even so of the Earth-born the harvest he reaped ; and with blood did they run,
Those furrows, as hurrying runnels that brim from a fountain's plashing.
Fast fell they, some on their faces, bowing their knees, and gnashing
Their teeth on the rough clods—this one stayed on his palm, and he
On his side : as they wallowed they seemed as the monster-brood of the sea.
And many, or ever their feet from beneath the earth had come,
Pierced through, from the height whereunto they had risen, even therefrom
Down-drooping, were resting their death-dewed brows on the earth again.
Even so, I ween, when Zeus down-poureth the measureless rain,
Droop orchard-shoots new-planted, till low on the earth they lie,
Snapped hard by the roots, that the gardener's toil is doubled thereby,
And there come on the heart of the lord of the vineyard, which planted the same,
Confusion of face and deadly anguish : in such wise came
On Aiêtes the king vexation of spirit and heaviness.
And back to the city he wended amidst of the Kolchian press,
Dark-plotting to bring the heroes' purpose with speed to nought.
And the daylight died, and Jason's mighty achievement was wrought.

THE FOURTH BOOK

Now take thou up the story, O Goddess of Song, and sing
The afflictions and thoughts of the Kolchian maid; for as touching this thing
In a tempest of wilderment whirled is my soul, that I know not to say
Whether for bitter infatuate passion she fled away
From the land of the Kolchian folk, or driven of panic dismay.
Now the king in the midst of his Kolchian princes and men of might
Against the heroes devising treachery sat through the night
In his halls, and hot in his soul did the vehement anger rise
For the trial whose issue he loathed, and he weened not in any wise
That unhelped of his daughters had Jason prevailed that task to fulfil. 10
But Medea's spirit did Hêrê with woefullest anguish thrill:
And she quaked like a fawn light-footed, the which the hounds' deep bay
Hath scared, the while in the tangled depths of a copse she lay.
For straightway she surely foreboded that nothing concealed should remain
Of her help, and for this should she fill up a cup of uttermost bane.
And her maids which were privy thereto she dreaded, and filled were her eyes
With fire, and the ears of her rang with a sound as of awful cries.
And oftimes she clutched at her throat, and moaned in her wretched despair,
As once and again she rent the tresses of her hair.
And there had the maiden beyond her weird her own death wrought.

By tasting of poison ; and Hêrê's purpose had come to nought,
But for this, that the Goddess stirred her to flee in her panic dread
With Phrixus' sons. So her fluttering spirit was comforted
In her breast ; and into her bosom in eager haste did she pour
All mingled her spell-drugs and poisons, her casket's deadly store.
And she kissed her bed, and her hands on the walls with loving caress
Lingered : she kissed the posts of the doors ; and one long tress
She severed, and left it her bower within, for her mother to be
A memorial of maidenhood's days, and with passionate voice moaned she :
'This tress in mine own stead leave I, or ever I go, unto thee,
My mother ; and, far though I wend, yet take farewell from me !
Farewell thou, Chalkiopê, and mine home !—Would God that the wave,
Ere thou cam'st to the Kolchian land, O stranger, had yawned for thy grave ! '
So spake she, and down from her eyelids in floods the teardrops ran.
Then, even as stealeth forth from the house of a wealthy man
A bondmaid, whom fate but newly hath torn from her fatherland-soil,
Who never till now hath tasted the lot of bitter toil,
But unschooled to misery, shrinking in horror from slavery
Under the cruel hands of a mistress, forth doth she flee ;
Even so from her home forth hasted the lovely maid that day.
Yea, and the bolts of the doors self-moving to her gave way
Leaping aback at the swift-breathed spell of her magic song.
And with feet unsandalled she ran the narrow lanes along,
While her left hand gathered a fold of her mantle, to screen from sight
Her brows and her face and her lovely cheeks, the while with her right
The hem of the skirt of her tunic she held upraised from the ground.
And swiftly without the towers that girded the wide burg round
By the darkling path in her terror she came ; and no man knew
Of the warders thereof, but past them all unseen she flew.
Thence marked she well to the temple the way, nor unweeting she was

Of the path, for that oft thereby in her questing she wont to pass
Seeking for corpses and deadly roots, as the wont is still
Of the sorceress. Ever with quivering dread did the heart of her thrill.
And Titania beheld her, as upward she floated from heaven's far bourne,
As she wandered distraught; and the white Moon-goddess in triumph-scorn
Over Medea exulted, and thus to her heart 'gan say:
'Ha, not I only adown to the Latmian cavern stray,
Nor I alone for Endymion the comely with love am afire!
Ha, many a time when mine heart was yearning with hot desire,
Did thy strong spells drive me from heaven, that thou in the rayless night 60
Unhindered might'st work thy sorceries, deeds that are aye thy delight.
Now thou too hast part in the same infatuate passion, I trow,
And a god of affliction hath made this Jason a torment and woe
Unto thee! Pass on, and harden thine heart, be thou never so wise,
To take up thy burden of anguish, thy doom full-fraught with sighs.'
So spake she; but swiftly the maid's feet bare her, as onward she strained;
And glad was she when the height of the bank of the river she gained.
And overagainst her beheld the splendour of fire: nightlong
For joy of the trial triumphant they fed it, the hero-throng.
And she lifted her voice clear-pealing: across the darkness she cried: 70
To the youngest of Phrixus' children she called from the farther side,
Unto Phrontis: and he with his brother discerned Medea's call;
And the son of Aison knew it; and hushed were the heroes all
In amazement, so soon as they knew of a certainty whose was the cry.
Thrice called she aloud, and thrice, as his company bade reply,
Phrontis in answer shouted, the while with swift-plied oar
The heroes were rowing their ship unto where she stood on the shore.
Not yet to the land were they casting the hawsers forth of the ship,
When lo! to the shore with feet light-bounding did Jason leap

From the height of the deck-planks; and after him Phrontis to land hath sprung,
And Argus, the children of Phrixus. About their knees she clung,
Clasping them round with clinging hands, and Medea cried:
'Deliver me, O my friends, the hapless!—yea, and beside
Save from Aiêtes yourselves: for all hath been brought to light,
Yea, all: and there cometh no help therefor. But speed we our flight
In your ship, ere the king shall have mounted his swift-horsed car for the chase.
And the Fleece of Gold will I give you: with slumber-spells will I daze
Its serpent warder. But thou in thy comrades' presence take
The Gods to witness the vows which thy lips, O stranger, spake
Unto me: neither make me, when hence I have fled and afar from my land,
An outcast dishonoured, as one by whose side no kinsman doth stand.'
In anguish she spake: but with gladness exceeding the heart 'gan stir
Of Aison's son. At his knees as she bowed, he uplifted her
Gently, and straightway embraced her, and spake to her words of cheer:
'Lady, let Zeus himself the Olympian my troth-plight hear;
Let Hêrê of Wedlock, the Bride of Zeus, in witness be near,
That I surely will make thee mine own true wife mine halls within
Whensoever returning again unto Hellas-land I shall win.'
He spake, and her hand with his right hand caught in the clasp of love.
Then did the maiden bid them to speed to the sacred grove
The swift ship straightway, that so, ere Aiêtes was ware, they might seize
And bear away in the darkness of night the Golden Fleece.
Even with the word was the deed performed by the eager men;
For they took her aboard, and forth from the land their galley then
Thrust they: with plashing loud the pinewood oars 'gan strain

In the hands of the chieftains. But backward darting the maiden again
Outstretched her despairing hands to the shore: but Jason spake
Comforting words, and restrained her whose heart went nigh to break.
In the hour when men from their eyes the fetters of slumber cast,
Even huntsmen, which put their trust in their hounds, nor ever waste 110
In slumber the end of the night, but the light of the sun they prevent,
Lest, ere they be forth, he efface the track of the beasts, and the scent
Of the quarry, with stainless-gleaming shafts down-smiting thereon;
Even then with the maid from the galley forth stepped Aison's son
On a grassy sward. The Couch of the Ram men call that spot,
For that there he rested first his knees with toil overwrought,
As he bare on his back the Minyan scion of Athamas.
And anigh it all smoke-besmirched the base of an altar there was,
Which the Aiolid Phrixus to Zeus the Preserver of Exiles did build,
And the Golden Marvel offered thereon, as, gracious-willed, 120
Hermes bade, in the way as he met him. The hero-crew
There set them aland, as Argus gave them counsel to do.
So these twain fared by the pathway that led to the sacred grove,
Seeking the oak-tree marvellous-huge, mid the branches whereof
Was hanging the Fleece, like a morning-cloud that flusheth red
In the beams of the sun as he riseth up from his ocean-bed.
But barring their path did the neck exceeding long uprise
Of the serpent glaring upon them with keen unsleeping eyes
As they came; and in awful wise did he hiss; and the banks of the flood
Far-stretching echoed, and sighed the measureless depths of the 130 wood.
The people that dwell from Titanian Aia far away
In the Kolchian land by the outfall of Lykus heard, even they—
Of Lykus, which parteth his flow from Araxes' rattle and roar,
And blendeth with Phasis his sacred stream, and these twain pour
Their mingled waters in one to the dark Caucasian sea.
Young mothers in terror awoke, and their hands in agony

Cast they around their babes new-born, in their arms which slept,
As the tiny limbs with the horror of that hiss thrilled and leapt.
And even as when, above a smouldering faggot-pile,
The eddies of smoke roll upward in murky coil on coil,
One after another swiftly ever on high they spring
From beneath in wavering wreaths uprushing and hovering;
Even so that monster was writhing and heaving the endless trail
Of his coils overlapped with the myriad-ranged harsh-crackling scale.
But, even as he writhed him, came before his eyes the maid,
With sweet voice summoning Sleep, most mighty of Gods, to her aid,
On the monster to cast his spell: and to her that through night's deep mirk
Paceth, the Underworld Queen, she cried to speed her work.
And followed her Aison's son in fear: but, lulled by the song,
The serpent by this was relaxing the thorn-ridge endless-long
Of his Titan-spires, and was lengthening out his coils untold,
Even as a dark wave over a sluggish sea slow-rolled,
A dumb and a thunderless surge: yet still, in despite of the spell,
His grisly head he uplifted on high, with purpose fell
To encompass the twain with the grip of his murderous jaws: but she,
Dipping the newly-slivered spray of a juniper-tree
In her mystic brewis, singing—singing—rained down fast
Untempered spells on his eyne, and about him and o'er him was cast
Sleep by the drug's strong fume; and his dragon-jaws he laid
On the earth in the selfsame place, and his endless coils through the shade
Of the myriad stems of the forest stretching afar were unrolled.
Then from the oak-tree the hero snatched the Fleece of Gold
At the maiden's bidding. Unswerving all the while she stayed
And smeared on the head of the monster her unguent, till Jason bade,
Till himself said, 'Turn we again, and fare to the galley aback.'
Then left she the War-god's grove, where the vast shades brooded black.
And even as a maiden may catch on her vesture of delicate thread
The light of the mid-month's moon, when she saileth the heavens overhead

Her high-roofed bridal bower, and her heart in her breast is aglow
With joy that her eyes behold that lovely splendour ; so 170
Exulting did Jason the mighty Fleece in his hands upraise.
And suddenly over his forehead and over his sunburnt face
From its shimmering flocks there rested a flush that flamelike shined.
And great as the hide of a yearling steer, or the fell of a hind
That is callèd a brocket in speech of the hunters of the wold,
So great was its length and its breadth all overtufted with gold,
Heavy with flocks thick-clustered ; and ever as onward he passed
From under his feet the earth an answering sheen upcast.
Now veiling the man's left shoulder the gleaming burden shone
Down-trailed from the height of his neck to his heel as he trod, 180
and anon
Did he gather it up in his clutch, for that sorely he feared the while
Lest a God or a man might meet him and wrest from his hands
the spoil.
Dawn over the earth was spread, and now those twain returned
To their company. Marvelled the youths to behold how the
great Fleece burned
A splendour as lightning of Zeus. Upsprang they, for eager-keen
Was each man to touch the glory, and clasp it his hands between.
But the son of Aison withheld them : a mantle thereover he threw
New-woven, to hide it. To Argo's stern the maiden he drew,
And he seated her there ; and he spake to the heroes all his rede :
'No longer forbear now, friends, to your fatherland homeward 190
to speed :
For the emprise now for the which we dared the peril and pain
Of a desperate voyage, toiling with bitter travail and strain,
All this by the maiden's counsels lightly hath been fulfilled.
To the home-land her will I bring—yea, so herself hath willed—
My bride true-wedded : but ye, forasmuch as the saviour she is
Of all Achaia-land, and of your own souls, I wis,
Save her ; for surely, I ween, will Aiétes with all his array
Go forth, with intent from the river seaward to bar our way.
Now down through the ship, man ranged after man in order arow,
Shall the half of you sit at the oars to toil, that the half of you so

May uplift the ox-hide shields for a fence from the darts of the foe,
Guarding our home-return. Lo, now in our hands do we bear
Our children, our fatherland dearly-beloved, and the silver hair
Of our sires; and with this our venture the fate of Hellas is bound,
Or to reap confusion of face, or a glory far-renowned.'
So spake he, and donned his harness of fight; and shouted the crew
With wondrous-eager souls; and forth of the scabbard he drew
His sword, and the ship's stern-hawsers he severed in twain with the brand.
And hard by the maiden, in armour clad, hath he taken his stand
By Ankaius the helmsman, and flashed the oars as the good ship raced, 210
As to speed her forth of the river they strained in desperate haste.
But by this to Aiêtes the king and to all the Kolchians known
Was Medea's love, and revealed were all the deeds she had done.
And they swarmed to the gathering-place in their harness of battle, untold
As the crested waves of the sea by the stormy wind uprolled,
Or as leaves of the forest myriad-branched that earthward sail
In the month of the fall of the leaf—whereof who telleth the tale?
So numberless these went pouring the banks of the river along
With frenzy of shouting: on fair-fashioned chariot amidst of the throng
Glorious Aiêtes showed above all with his steeds, the gift 220
Of the Sun-god; for even as the blasts of the wind were they passing-swift.
In his left hand his shapely-rounded buckler on high did he rear,
And a pine-brand exceeding huge in his right: and his giant spear
Beside him rose up straight and high; and the reins of the car
Absyrtus grasped in his hands. But Argo by this was afar
Cleaving the brine, to the stalwart oarsmen's stroke as she leapt
By the down-rushing flood of the mighty river seaward swept.
But the king in a madness of anguish uplifted his hands to the sky:
To the Sun and to Zeus, the beholders of evil deeds, did he cry;
And he turned him to all his host, and he shouted terribly: 230

'Except ye lay hands on the maiden, and seize, or on land it may be,
Or finding their ship yet tossed on the swell of the open sea,
And bring her, that so I may glut my fury, wherewith I burn
For revenge, on your own heads all these things shall light: ye shall learn
The measure of all my wrath and all my revenging then.'
So spake Aiêtes: on that same day did the Kolchian men
Launch forth their galleys, and cast in the ships their tackling-array,
And the selfsame day sailed forth on the sea: thou wouldst not say
That so mighty a host was this of ships, but in crowd on crowd
The nations of bird-folk over the sea were clamouring loud. 240
Swiftly the wind blew, even as Hêrê the Goddess planned,
To the end that Aiaian Medea might reach the Pelasgian land
Right soon, that in her might the bane of Pelias' house be found.
So the men with the third day's dawn the hawsers of Argo bound
To the Paphlagons' strand, where the sea and the waters of Halys meet:
For Medea bade them to land, and with sacrifice to entreat
Hekatê's grace. What things for that incantation of hell
The maiden prepared and offered, thereof let no man tell.
Let my spirit enkindle me not to darken therewith my lay!
Yea, awe refraineth my lips. Yet the altar on that far day 250
To the Goddess upreared by the heroes hard by the breaking sea
Yet standeth, a sign to be seen of the children of days to be.
Straightway to Aison's son, and the heroes withal, came back
Remembrance of Phineus, and how that he spake of another track
To be found from Aia: howbeit to all was his meaning dim,
Till Argus arose and spake, and eager they hearkened to him:
'We may win to Orchomenus, whither the prophecy bade us fare
Of the seer unerring, whose guests in the days overpast ye were.
For another voyaging-course there is, a sea-path shown
By the priests of the Deathless, the sons of Thêbê, Tritonis' town. 260
Not yet was the star-host, that whirl round heaven their chariots of fire:
Not yet of the sacred Danaan race, though a man should inquire,

Aught might he hear. Apidanian Arcadians alone on the earth
Dwelt—the Arcadians which lived, or ever the moon had birth,
Mid the mountains acorn-sustained, it is told. No sceptred hand
Of Deukalion's glorious line ruled then the Pelasgian land,
In the days when men called Egypt, the fruitful land of corn,
The Morning-land, the mother of peoples elder-born.
And of Trito her fair-flowing river was named, of whom all the plain
Of the Morning-land is watered; for never descendeth the rain 270
From Zeus thereupon: from his floods the stintless harvests spring.
From that land, say they, a certain king went journeying
All Europe and Asia through, by the strength and the prowess made bold
And the aweless might of his people, and cities he builded untold
Whithersoever he came, whereof some remain to this day,
Some not, for that long generations since then have passed away.
But Aia abideth unshaken: a nation the sons' sons yet
Abide of the men whose dwelling in Aia the hero set.
And graven memorials these men keep of their fathers' days
Upon pillars, whereon is every bourne and all the ways 280
Of the watery waste and the land, as ye journey on all sides round.
Now a river, the uttermost horn of the Ocean, therein is found,
Wide and exceeding deep, that a dromond may sail the same.
Far on their chart have they traced it, and Ister they named its name.
And awhile through the boundless tilthland it cleaveth its way afar
As but one; for beyond the North-wind's blasts its fountains are,
Where midst the Rhipaian mountains it bursteth forth in thunder:
But so soon as it parteth the Thracian and Scythian marches asunder,
There is it cleft in twain, and the half of its flood it sendeth
Hereby to the sea Ionian, the residue southward trendeth 290
Where a deep gulf up from the sea Trinacrian northward bendeth—
That sea which lieth beside your land, if the tale be true
That forth of your land Acheloüs the river fleeteth thereto.'
So spake he; and sent by the Goddess a happy portent came;
And all they looking thereunto hailed it with joyful acclaim
For a sign that their voyaging-track was this: for a splendour in heaven
Shone in a far-stretching furrow to point where their path was given.

And there glad-hearted they left the son of Lykus, and fled
With wide-spread canvas over the sea, looking back as they sped
On the Paphlagonian Hills, neither rounded Karambis-head, 300
Forasmuch as the breezes held, and the heavenly fire's long gleam
Shone ever before, till they won unto Ister's mighty stream.
Now the rest of the Kolchian host, when nothing their search
availed,
Forth through the Crags Dark-blue from the Pontus-sea had sailed.
But others went to the river, whose chieftain Absyrtus was;
And unto the Fair Mouth turning aside from the sea did he pass,
And prevented them, mooring beyond the neck of land that ran
Athwart the innermost gulf of the sea Ionian.
For around the island Peukê the waters of Ister pour,
An isle three-cornered, whose breadth looketh out on the breakers 310
hoar,
And the narrow point up-stream, and about it the flood's outfall
Is cleft in twain; and the one the passage of Narex they call;
And that on the nether side the Fair Mouth: even thereby
The Kolchian array with Absyrtus anchored hastily;
While the heroes sailed far up to the uttermost spur of the isle.
Now the field-abiding shepherds forsook in the meadows the while
Flocks without number, for dread of the ships; for they weened
that these
Were beasts that had risen out of the monster-teeming seas.
For never on galleys that ride the waves had they gazed ere then,
Nor they, nor the Thracian Scythians, nor yet the Sigynian men, 320
Nor yet the Graukenian folk, nor the Sindian tribes that abide
Round Laurium now, on the steppes of the wilderness boundless-wide.
But when they had run by Angurus, the Kauliac cliffs withal—
Afar from Angurus the mountain riseth their long rock-wall—
Around which Ister divideth, and this way and that way run
His rushing waters, and out to the Laurian plain they won,
Then forth to the Kronian Sea the Kolchians came, and beset
All the outgoings thereof, that the quarry might 'scape not their net.
So Argo, descending behind them the flood, passed forth hard by
Where islands twain, the Brygëian Isles of Artemis, lie.

Now it fell that in one of these a hallowed temple stood ;
In the other the heroes, avoiding Absyrtus' multitude
Landed, seeing the foe had left those twin isles void
Of their host, for awe of the Daughter of Zeus ; but all beside,
Thronged with the Kolchian men, barred every seaward way.
Yea, too, of their host upon other isles hard by left they
Which betwixt the Nestian land and Salanko the river lay.
There, being few against many, that day had the Minyan men
Yielded in that grim fight to their foes : howbeit ere then
Made they a covenant, fain that the strife should abide unstriven. 340
For the Golden Fleece,—forasmuch as Aiêtes' pledge had been given
To the heroes therefor, if the ordeal they dared, and accomplished the toil—
That prize should they keep, as lawfully won; yea, whether their guile
Or their strength in the king's despite had prevailed that splendour to win.
But as touching Medea—for stubborn the wrangling waxed herein—
Unto Lêto's Daughter, aloof from the throng, should they give her in ward,
Till her cause should be judged of a king, some justice-dispensing lord,
Whether he doom that they yield her up to return to the home
Of her father, or doom her to Hellas-land with the heroes to come.
Now so soon as the maiden mused upon all things purposed of these, 350
With keen-thrilling anguish her heart was tempest-tossed without cease :
And straightway she called forth Jason aloof from his comrades alone,
And she led him away and away, till far apart were they gone :
There uttered she speech all broken with sobs, as she looked in his eyes :
'O Aison's son, what purpose is this that now ye devise
Touching me ? Hath thy triumph brought utter forgetfulness unto thee ?
Dost thou nothing regard thy promises, all that thou spakest to me

In stress of thy need? Where now are the oaths of the Suppliants' King
Zeus?—and thine honied promises, whither have these taken wing?
By reason of these, in unseemly wise, with passion unshamed 360
I forsook my fatherland home, and the glory of halls far-famed,
Yea, and my parents—all that was most unto me; and I sail
Far over the sea alone, where the plaintive sea-mews wail,
Because of thy trouble, that I might redeem from destruction thy life
To accomplish the fire-bulls' quelling, the Earth-born giants' strife.
Yea, and the very Fleece, for the which ye had sailed to our shore,
All by my folly ye won. Foul shame thereby did I pour
On womankind! Wherefore, I say, as thy daughter, thy wife, I stand,
Yea, and thy sister, who follow thee back unto Hellas-land.
Oh now with purpose of heart stand by me, neither forsake me 370
Afar and forlorn of thee, to the gathering of kings to betake thee!
But in any wise save me; and sealed abide thy solemn vow,
Which is plighted, by justice of man and of God; or else do thou
Shear, of thy pity, this my throat with thy falchion through,
That so for my frenzied love I may reap the guerdon due.
O heartless!—if that he doom that my brother's prey I remain,
This king unto whose stern judgment ye now would commit, ye twain,
Your cruel covenant, how shall I come to my father's sight?
With glory in sooth!—what revenges, what devilish torment will light
Upon me!—what agony-cup shall I drain for the dreadful deed 380
That I wrought! Oh, never think that in bliss your return shall speed!
Ne'er may the World's Queen, bride of Zeus, accomplish for thee—
She in whom thou delightest—this! Then may'st thou remember me
When anguish-racked: may the Fleece like a dream fleet away from thine hand
Down the wind to the netherworld-gloom! Be thou chased from thy fatherland
By the Spirits of Vengeance for me, even after the measure of all

That through thy betrayal I suffered! That earthward my curses should fall
Unaccomplished, shall God forbid; for a great oath thou hast transgressed,
O ruthless! Not long, for all this covenant-plight, at rest
From your troubles, on me shall ye wink with the eye, to make me your jest.' 390
So spake she, seething with vehement rage: fierce-eager was she
To fire the ship, and to hew it in pieces utterly,
And to hurl herself mid the ravening flame. But, half-adread,
Did Jason essay to soothe her with gentle words; and he said:
'Ah, lady, forbear: me too this covenant liketh not.
Only a little delay from the strife herein have we sought:
Such a host of foes like a cloud of fire is on every side
For thy sake. Yea, and the folk which in this same land abide
Be eager to help Absyrtus, that back again to the hall
Of thy sire he may hale thee like to a captive battle-thrall. 400
Howbeit should we in hateful destruction all be slain
If we closed in the fight with these; and therein were bitterer pain,
If we leave thee a prey no less unto these, and withal we die.
But now shall this covenant find us a path of guile, whereby
To destroy him. The folk of the land shall not be fain as before
To favour the Kolchians in thee, when their king shall be with them no more,
He who forsooth as thy champion and brother doth claim thee to-day.
Yea also, I will not refrain me from matching my might in the fray
With the Kolchian men, if then they bar mine homeward way.'
For her comfort he spake; but with deadly words did she make reply: 410
'Give heed now:—it needs must be, when peril and shame are nigh,
That we likewise counsel thereafter. Distraught I was at the first
In mine error, and god-misguided accomplished desires accurst.
Do thou be my shield from the Kolchian spears in the toil of the strife,
And I will beguile this man to lay in thine hands his life.

He shall come: and with dazzling gifts of welcoming win thou his heart,
If I haply persuade the heralds to hold themselves apart,
And draw him alone unto me to hearken the thing I would say.
Then thou, if this deed be good in thy sight—I say not nay—
Slay him, and meet thereafter the Kolchian men in the fray.' 420
Even so these twain consented, and twined the net of guile
For Absyrtus; and many a gift of welcome prepared they the while.
And with these a sacred mantle, a woven crimson flame,
Gave they, Hypsipylê's gift. The Graces had fashioned the same
For the God Dionysus in sea-girt Dia; and he on his son,
Thoas, bestowed it; and this at his fleeing Hypsipylê won.
And, with many a lovely marvel, that parting-gift wrought fair
She gave unto Aison's son. Thine hands would linger there
Touching, thine eyes beholding, ever unsatisfied.
And a scent ambrosial breathed therefrom, since that sweet tide 430
When the King Nysaian himself thereon lay down to rest,
With wine and with nectar flushed, lay clasping the beauteous breast
Of the maiden the daughter of Minos, who sailed from the Knossian land
With Theseus, and there was forsaken of him upon Dia's strand.
And Medea wrought on the heralds—for subtlest speech did she frame
To beguile them—when unto the Goddess's temple Absyrtus came
For the covenant's sake, and when night's black pall should around them be rolled,
To depart, that with him she might plot to take that Fleece of Gold
From the heroes, and bearing the prize with him to fare again
To Aiêtes' halls, for that Phrixus' sons by force had ta'en 440
And had given her unto the strangers a captive to bear overseas.
Even so she beguiled them; and wide through the air and afar on the breeze
Cast she her witchery-spells, of might to draw from his lair
On the trackless mountain the wild beast, lurk he how distant soe'er.
Ah, ruthless Love, great grief, great curse to the sons of earth!
Of thee fell feuds, and anguish-moans, and laments have birth;

From thee therewithal unnumbered woes as a flood forth burst.
'Gainst the sons of our foes, thou god, array thee battle-athirst,
As when thou didst thrill the heart of Medea with madness accurst!
But how, when to meet her he came, by an evil doom did she quell 450
Absyrtus?—for this thing next must the song in order tell.
When the heroes had left the maiden on Artemis' island-strand
By the covenant, ran they their ships in a several place aland,
Even Kolchians and Minyans. Then to his ambush did Jason hie,
For Absyrtus to lie in wait, and for them of his company.
And now that hero, deathward-beguiled by their promise dread,
Over the swell of the sea in his galley swiftly sped,
And under the mirk night stepped on the Isle of the Holy Place,
And alone fared onward to meet his sister face to face,
And to try her with words,—as though some tender child should try 460
A wintertide torrent, when strong men may not cross thereby!—
If perchance she would weave him a treachery-snare for the stranger-crew,
And now were they making agreement for all these things, they two,
When suddenly out of the gloom of his ambush the Aisonid leapt
Uplifting his naked sword in his hand: and the maiden swept
Her veil o'er her eyes, as she turned them away for averting of guilt
That she might not behold the blood of her slaughtered brother spilt,
And him, as a flesher felleth a strong-horned bull, even so
Did he mark him, and smite him, hard by the fane which long ago
The Brygians which dwelt on the mainland-shore unto Artemis 470 wrought.
In the porchway thereof on his knees he fell; and the hero caught
In his hands, as he gasped his latest breath, the dark-red tide
As it welled from the gash, and he hurled that murder-rain, that it dyed
Crimson her silver veil and her robe, as she shrank aside.
And with swift side-glance the all-quelling Vengeance-fiend espied,
And her pitiless eye beheld that murderous deed they had done.
But the ends of the dead man's limbs then severed Aison's son:
Thrice licked he the blood from the sod, thrice spat it again to the dust,

As the slayer must do that atonement be made for the treachery-thrust.
Then hid he the clammy corpse in the ground, where unto this day 480
In the land of Absyrtan men be those bones lapped in clay.
Now the heroes the while gazed forth through the night, and beheld where shone
The glare of a torch which the maiden upraised for a sign to set on;
And alongside the Kolchian galley they laid their ship straightway,
And they slaughtered the crew of the Kolchians, even as wild hawks slay
The tribes of the woodland cushats, or lions of the wold
Drive huddled a mighty flock, when they leap to the midst of the fold.
No, of them all was there none that escaped, but on all that throng
Even as flame making havoc they rushed; and it seemed o'erlong
Ere Jason, afire for their helping, came: no need of his aid
Had they; nay rather for him by this were their hearts afraid. 490
Thereafter they sat them down to devise for their voyaging
Deep counsel; and, yet as they mused, stole into the midst of the ring
The maiden. And Peleus resolved him the first, and he spake the thing:
'Now call I upon you to enter up into the ship, and to row
Cleaving your sea-path onward, while yet it is night, and the foe
Tarry; for when with the dawn they shall see and be ware of their plight,
There is no man, I trust me, who, bidding them follow the track of your flight,
Shall win them to hearken a word; but, as folk of their king bereft,
With grievous dissension shall these, and with faction, asunder be 500 cleft.
Wherefore our path henceforward,—when sundered our foemen are
Each from his fellow,—to Hellas home shall be easier far.'
He spake, and the young men praised the counsel of Aiakus' child;
And they entered the ship with haste, and they grasped the oars, and they toiled
Without rest, till they won by the sacred isle of Elektra—the same

Of the eyots is highest—and so to the river Eridanus came.
Now the Kolchians, so soon as the doom of their murdered king they knew,
Eager were they for Argo to search and her Minyan crew
Through all the Kronian Sea : but Hêrê held them back
By terrible lightnings that flashed evermore from the cloudy rack, 510
That they shuddered at last when they thought on their homes in Kytaia-land,
And quailed for Aiêtes' wrath, and a king's avenging hand.
So went they ashore, and abiding homes in the land they made
Far-scattered ; for some set foot on the selfsame isles where stayed
The heroes ;—the name of Absyrtus yet do the islanders bear;—
By the river Illyrican's darkling depths did others rear
A tower-girt burg where the tomb of Harmonia and Kadmus doth stand :
With Enchelean men do they dwell : and some in the mountain-land
Amidst of the ridges abide which the Crests of Thunder they call
Since the day when crashed the thunders of Zeus their souls to appal, 520
That they crossed not over the flood to the isle, on the heroes to fall.
Now these, when they weened that the home-return's grim peril was past,
Who had gotten so far on now, made Argo's hawsers fast
To the strand Hyllaian ; for thick in the river the eyots lie,
And a troublous track they make it for them that would voyage thereby.
And the folk Hyllaian devised not their hurt, as in that past day :
Nay, rather they did their endeavour to help them forth on their way.
And they won for their guerdon the mighty tripod Apollo gave.
For tripods twain had Phœbus bestowed, far over the wave
To be borne in the Quest of Aison's son, when to Pytho's shrine 530
He wended, to ask touching this same voyage the purpose divine.
And this was their weird, that in whatso land those tripods were placed,
That land no foes breaking in thereupon should prevail to waste.
Wherefore in that land yet by Hyllê's pleasant town

That tripod abideth, hidden beneath the earth deep down,
That the talisman so may continue of men unseen for aye.
Howbeit their king no longer alive in the land found they,
Even Hyllus, whom Melitê lovely-faced unto Herakles bare
In Phaeacia-land; for of old to the halls did the hero fare
Of Nausithous and Makris, the nurse of the God Dionysus: 540
defiled
With the blood of his children, he came to be cleansed. There
saw he the child
Of Aigaius the river, even the Naiad Melitê:
And he loved her, and humbled the maid, and Hyllus the strong
bare she
In Phaeacia-land. And he dwelt in Nausithous' halls awhile,
Being yet but a little one: but he left thereafter the isle.
For, as waxed within him his might, he brooked no longer to stay
At a king's beck there in the island that owned Nausithous' sway.
But he fared to the Kronian Sea, and a host of her sons forth led
From Phaeacia-land: yea, also the king his journeying sped,
The hero Nausithous. There did he stablish his home, and was slain 550
Defending his kine from the Mentors, the rovers of the main.
Now, Goddesses, tell how Argo's wondrous ensign came
Without this sea, by Ausonia-land, and the isles men name
The 'Long Row,' lone sea-cradles that nurse a Ligurian seed—
How stood clear forth mid-sea—what strong constraint, what need
Thitherward led her, what breezes they were that wafted her speed.
'Twas, I ween, when Absyrtus had fallen in mighty overthrow,
That the wrath of Zeus, the King of the Gods, for their deed
was aglow.
Yet he ordained the transgressors to cleanse them of murder's stain
By the counsels of Circê, and so, after measureless travail and pain, 560
Home to return; yet this of the princes did no man know.
But they sped, when the land Hyllaian sank on the sea-marge low,
Afar; and they left behind them the isles that were thronged erewhile
With the Kolchians, isle Liburnian ranged in the sea after isle,
Issa, Dyskeladus, then Pityeia's lovely shore.
So passed they these, and overagainst Kerkyra they bore.

There was it Poseidon caused Asôpus' daughter to rest,
When by reason of love he wafted Kerkyra the beautiful-tressed
From the land of Phlius afar : and mariners marking it swell
Blackening up from the sea, while all about it fell 570
The folds of its darkling forests, named it Kerkyra the Black.
Thence sped they by Melitê, glad for the breeze blowing soft on their track.
By Kerôsus the steep, and, far in the offing and faint as it showed,
By Nymphaia they fleeted, the isle where the Lady Kalypso abode,
The daughter of Atlas : and misty and doubtful appeared to their ken
The Crests of Thunder. And known unto Hêrê even then
Were the counsels of Zeus concerning these, and his mighty wrath.
Yet devised she how that great voyage should prosper, and full in their path
Uproused she against them the storm-winds, which caught them, and backward swept
To Elektra's rocky isle. But, from surge unto surge as they leapt, 580
Suddenly heard they a beam with a man's voice cry unto them
Out of the hollow ship, the which in the midst of the stem
Athênê had set—it was hewn from an oak in Dodona that grew;
And deadliest fear laid hold upon them as they hearkened thereto,
To the voice revealing the wrath of Zeus, and the stern decree
Which ordained that they should not escape from the paths of an endless sea,
And affliction of tempests, till Circê should purge the guilt away
Of Absyrtus' ruthless murder. Moreover the voice bade pray
Polydeukes and Kastor withal to the Gods everlasting, to grant
First through the Ausonian sea a path to the secret haunt 590
Of Circê, the daughter whom Persê unto the Sun-god bare.
So Argo cried through the darkness : uprose that god-born pair,
Tyndareus' sons, and their hands to the deathless Gods did they raise
Praying the prayer commanded ; but hushed in awed amaze
Were the rest of the Minyan heroes. On under canvas, and on,
Leapt Argo, till deep within Eridanus' river they won.
There, stricken of old on the breast with the smouldering levin-fire,

Phaethon half-consumed from the car of his Sun-god sire
Fell into the gulf of the fathomless mere ; and the seething stream
From his burning wound even yet upbelcheth clouds of steam. 600
Neither across that water outspreading her pinions light
Any fowl of the air may win her way, but, even mid-flight
Faint-fluttering, down mid the flame it plungeth. On either side
Round poplars slim the Sun-god's daughters in slow dance glide,
In misery wailing a piteous plaint, and adown from their eyne
Raining to earth do the glittering drops of amber shine.
These, parched by the beams of the sun, lie strewn at their feet on the sand ;
But whensoever the blasts of the wailing wind on the strand
Are dashing the dark mere's surging billows and onward hurling,
Then to Eridanus roll they, a huddled throng on-whirling 610
In a rippling stream. Now a legend thereof do the Kelt-folk tell
How that these which in eddies be tossed be the tears from Apollo that fell,
Even Lêto's son, which he shed without number in ancient days,
What time he came to the Hyperboreans' sacred race,
By his father's threatenings driven from the sunlit heaven to the earth,
Wroth for his son, unto whom Karônis the Nymph gave birth
In bright Lakyreia, where Amyrus' outfall seaward is rolled.
Yea, such is the tale of these that amidst that people is told.
And, thereon as they sailed, no care for meat nor for drink had they,
Neither turned their thoughts unto gladness ; but ever day by day 620
Sorely afflicted they were till their burdened hearts grew faint
With the noisome stench that uprose, the unendurable taint
From Eridanus' streams that reeked of Phaethon burning still.
And ever by night they hearkened the shriek of the long wail shrill
From the Sun-god's daughters lamenting. Their tears, as they mourned and wept,
Like drops from the fruit of the olive adown to the waters were swept.
Thence into Rhodanus ran they, whose deep-flowing waters fleet
Into Eridanus' stream : and where the great floods meet,
Roar they turmoiling and seething. Now Rhodanus cometh from far,

From the ends of the earth, where the portals of Night and her 63
mansions are.
Thence bursteth he forth, and divideth his stream; for the one
part roareth
To the beaches of Ocean, and one to the sea Ionian poureth;
And a third to the main Sardinian, the sea-gulf limitless-vast,
Through seven mouths sendeth his flood. So from Rhodanus
forth they passed,
And they drave over wintry meres wide-spread—none telleth
their bound—
Over the Keltic mainland, and well-nigh there had they found
Inglorious doom: for a certain branch turns sidewards flowing
To the Ocean-gulf; thereinto were these, of the peril unknowing,
At point to thrust, and never alive had they won thereout.
But forth out of heaven Hêrê darted, and pealed her shout 64
From the rock Herkynian: with fear were they shaken because
of her cry
As one man all, for terribly crashed the wide-arched sky.
Backward they turned at the Goddess's warning, and then were
they ware
Of the track, whereby for their home-return they needs must fare.
So at last came they to a beach where the sea-surge moaning rolled,
By Hêrê's devising, through tribes of the Keltic folk untold
And Ligurians passing unharmed; for about them a mist-veil dread
Day after day, as homeward they fared, did the Goddess spread.
And so through the midmost mouth of the river Argo sailed,
And safe on the 'Long Row Isles' did they land; for the 65
prayers had prevailed
Of the sons of Zeus; for the which cause altars and temples aye
Unto these have been reared: nor with those sea-farers alone
went they
As helpers, but Zeus made these all mariners' saviours to be.
So the 'Long Row' left they, and on to Aithalia sped oversea.
There in athlete-strife did they supple their limbs, till the sweat
of them dripped
As rain, and the pebbles are flecked as with scarf-skin strigil-stripped

To this day; and their quoits and their wondrous armour are there, all stone;
And yet in the name of the haven the glory of Argo is shown.
And swiftly speeding thence they fleeted the sea-swell o'er,
To Ausonia's strand Tyrrhenian lifting their eyes evermore. 660
And they came to Aiaia's haven renowned, and forth of the prow
The hawsers adown to the strand they cast. And Circê now
There did they find, in the spray of the surf as she bathed her head,
For that dreams of the night had made the Spell-queen sorely adread.
For with blood did it seem that her palace-chambers, and every wall,
Were running, and flame was devouring her magic herbs, even all
Wherewith she was wont to bewitch what strangers soever came.
And herself with the blood of murder quenched that red-glowing flame,
Scooping it up with her hands: so ceased she from deadly dismay.
Wherefore, when dawning uprose, in the sea-surf's flashing spray 670
At her waking she washed her vesture and bathed her braided hair.
And beasts—not like unto ravening beasts of the wold these were,
Nor in likeness fashioned as men, but as though from a medley-heap
They had gotten their limbs—in a throng followed after her, even as sheep
From the folds in their multitudes following after the shepherd go.
Such shapes from the slime primeval did earth first cause to grow,
Herself the creator, compacted of limbs in confusion blent,
Ere yet into hardness she grew 'neath a rainless firmament,
Neither yet from the shafts of a scorching sun had she gotten her dews
Of refreshing; but these as the ranks of an army did Time confuse, 680
As he marshalled them forth into being:—such monsters after her pressed.
And exceeding amazement fell on the heroes; and each man guessed,
As he gazed upon Circê's form, and the eyes unsoftened with ruth,
That this should be none save Aiêtes' sister in very sooth.
So when she had bidden her terrors of dreams of the night to flee,
Back straightway she paced; and the heroes she bade in her subtlety
To follow, with witching beck of her fingers charming them on.

Yet steadfastly tarried the throng at the hest of Aison's son
In their place: but he went, and beside him the Kolchian maiden he drew.
So trod they the selfsame path till they entered in, those two, 690
Into Circê's hall. In amaze at their coming, the Sorcery-queen
Bade them to sit them down upon thrones of burnished sheen.
But soundless and wordless they sped to her hearthstone's hallowed place,
And there sat, after the wont of the suppliant in evil case;
And Medea bowed her adown, and in both hands hid her face.
But Jason set in the earth his mighty-hilted sword
Wherewithal he had slain Aiêtes' son; and his eyes guilt-lowered
Rose never to meet her glance. And straightway Circê was ware
Of the vengeance-hounded feet, and the hands that the blood-stain bare.
Therefore for awe of the statutes of Zeus the Suppliant-ward, 700
The Manslayer's Champion, yea, an exceeding jealous lord,
She offered the sacrifice whereby they are cleansed from their guilt,
When they come to his mercy-seat, by whose fierce hands blood hath been spilt.
First, to atone for the murder inexpiate yet, she held
Forth over their heads the young of a swine whose dugs yet swelled
From the fruit of the womb; thereafter she severed its throat, and she dyed
Their hands with the blood, and again with other drink-offerings beside
Made the atonement, calling on Zeus, the Cleanser of all,
The Avenger of suppliants murder-stained, on his name which call.
Then all that in cleansing she used from the mansion her hand- 710
maids bore,
The Naiad-nymphs, which ministered whatso she needed therefor.
But Circê abode by the hearth, and thereon without wine did she burn,
Praying the while, the atonement-cakes, to the end she might turn
From their anger the terrible Vengeance-fiends, and that Zeus might be wrought
Unto mercy and grace to the suppliants twain, his pardon who sought,

Whether they bowed at his throne for the life of a stranger shed,
Or their kindred hands with the blood of their nearest and dearest were red.
But when she had wrought all so, and the work of atonement was done,
Then raised she them up, and seated them each on a gleaming throne,
And herself sat nigh them, and eye to eye she straitly inquired 720
Wherefore they voyaged thus, and the thing that their hearts desired,
And from what far shore they had come to her land and her palace-home,
And in suppliance sat on her threshold; for into her soul had there come,
As she pondered, a hideous thought, as her dreams in remembrance returned,
And to hear the voice of the maiden her kinswoman sorely she yearned;
For she knew her, so soon as she lifted her down-drooped eyes from the earth,
For that plain to discern were all which drew from the Sun their birth,
Forasmuch as they lightened afar a splendour like as of gold
From the flashings of their eyes upon whoso their face should behold.
So Medea told unto her all things that she craved to know, 730
Speaking the Kolchian tongue with utterance gentle and low,—
Deep-hearted Aiêtes' child—of the Quest, of the paths where fared
The heroes, of all the conflicts sharp and stern that they dared;
How herself into sin by her woeful sister's pleading was led,
And how from her father's tyrannous terrors afar she had fled
With Phrixus' sons. But from this she shrank, that nothing she said
Of Absyrtus' murder; yet Circê discerned it: but pity-stirred
By her woe-stricken kinswoman's tears, she answered and spake the word:
'Ah wretch! thou hast found thee an evil and shameful homeward path!
Not long, I ween, shalt thou 'scape from Aiêtes' terrible wrath,
Nay, but full soon will he go to the dwellings of Hellas-land

To avenge the blood of his son, the unspeakable deed of thine hand.
Yet, forasmuch as my suppliant thou art, and my sister withal,
None other harm unto thee at thy coming of me shall befall.
But begone from mine halls, companion who art in an alien's flight—
Whosoe'er be this fellow unknown thou hast ta'en in thy father's despite!—
Nay, knee me no knees, earth-croucher! Naught shalt thou win save blame,
Save a curse for thine heart's devices, for this thy flight of shame!'
So spake she; and comfortless grief overwhelmed Medea: she cast
Her robe o'er her eyes, and she wailed and wailed, till the hero at last 750
By the hand upraised her, and forth of the palace-doors he led,
As she quivered with terror: and so from the mansions of Circê they fled.
Yet they passed not unmarked of the Bride of Zeus; but Iris bore
Tidings to her, when she spied them faring forlorn from her door.
For Hêrê had bidden her watch what time they should wend to the ship.
So again on her message she sped her, and spake with eager lip:
'Dear Iris, if ever mine hest thou fulfilledst in days overpast,
Now hie thee away, upon hurrying pinions speeding fast.
Hitherward bid thou Thetis to come to me, up from the sea
Rising: for need of her cometh to me. Thence hasten thee 760
Unto the echoing beaches whereon the brazen rows
Of the Fire-god's anvils are smitten with thunderous-crashing blows.
Speak to him to still the fire-blast's breathings, till Argo thereby
Shall have sped: thereafter shalt thou with my message to Aiolus fly—
Aiolus, king of the welkin-begotten winds of the sky:—
Thou tell him my purpose, that all blasts under the firmament
He may hush to rest, and let not a wandering gust be sent
To ruffle the face of the sea: let Zephyr alone blow on,
Until to Alkinoïs' isle Phaeacian the heroes have won.'
So spake she: forthright from the verge of Olympus did Iris leap 770
Cleaving the welkin, outspreading her light wings. Into the deep

Aegean she plunged, even there where the mansions of Nereus stand.
And first unto Thetis she came, and according to all the command
Of Hêrê she spake, and uproused her to Heaven's Queen to soar.
Next unto Hephaistus she came, and with speed at her word he forbore
From the clanging of hammers of iron; and stayed from their tempest-blast
Were the smoke-grimed bellows. Thereafter on to the third hath she passed,
Aiolus, Hippotas' glorious son. And even the while
Her message she told, and her swift knees rested from journeying toil,
Thetis from Nereus had gone and her sisters, and up from the sea 780
And Olympus-ward to the presence of Hêrê the Queen passed she.
And she caused her to sit by her side, and she uttered forth the word:
'Hear, Goddess Thetis, the thing that my spirit to tell thee is stirred.
Thou knowest how honoured is Aison's son of me in mine heart,
And they that with him in the toil of the Quest have borne their part.
Alone did I save them then through the Clashing Rocks when they flew,
When lightened the terrible flames, when the storm of the fire-blast blew,
When white were the ragged reefs with the spume of the boiling surge.
But a path by Scylla the Rock and Charybdis' fathomless gorge
Dreadly outbelching, awaits them:—O Thetis, I nursed thee of yore, 790
Even I, when thou wast but a wordless babe, and I loved thee more
Than the others thy fellows, the Maids in the halls of brine which abide,
Because thou refusedst, for all his desire, to couch by the side
Of Zeus—ay, so evermore be his thoughts all lust for embrace
Of a Goddess immortal, or couch of a princess of mortal race!
But for reverence of me, and for sacred fear which the heart of thee bare,
Didst thou shrink from his love: thereafter a mighty oath he swore
That never shouldst thou be called the bride of a God undying;

Yet for all this spared not, but followed thee sore loth, lustfully eyeing,
Till reverend Themis revealed unto him all Fate's decree, 800
How that thy weird was to bear a son who should mightier be
Than his father: wherefore, for all his desire, he refrained, for dread
Lest another should rise up matching his might, and should rule in his stead
O'er the Deathless, and so should himself not hold the dominion for aye.
But the best of the sons of earth for thine husband I found, in the day
That saw thine espousals, that sweetness of marriage might comfort thee,
And babes: and the Gods to the feast of thy solemnity,
Even all, did I bid: in mine own hands then did the splendour shine
Of the bridal torch, to requite that love, that honour of thine.
Go to now, a word will I tell thee, a prophecy faithful and fast: 810
What time thy son to the plain Elysian shall come at the last—
Thy son, who now in the dwellings of Cheiron the Centaur-king,
Forlorn of the mother's breast, is nursed by the Maids of the Spring—
There is it his weird to wed Aiêtes' daughter; but thou,
Medea's mother that shalt be, help thy daughter now,
Yea, Peleus withal—ha! why is thine anger quenchless-hot?
Folly was his; yet even the Gods may be folly-distraught.
Of a surety, I ween, by my behests shall Hephaistus cease
To cause the might of his fire to burn; and Hippotades,
Aiolus, all the rushing wings of his winds shall refrain, 820
Save only the steadfast-breathing West, till the heroes shall gain
The havens Phaeacian. Devise for them thou a return without bane.
For the crags and the tyrannous-buffeting surges make me afraid,
These only; and these shall be foiled, if thou and thy sisters aid.
In 'wildered amazement suffer them not to thrust their keel
Charybdis-ward, lest down through her jaws to destruction they reel.
Neither suffer thou them to approach unto Scylla's hideous lair—
Ausonian Scylla the deadly, whom nightmare Hekatê bare,
Even she whom Krataïis they call, to the Ancient of the sea—
Lest with her horrible jaws down-swooping suddenly 830

She destroy of the heroes the chiefest. But guide thou onward the ship
In the course where still is a hairbreadth escape from destruction's grip.'
So spake she, and Thetis to her made answer with suchlike word:
'If the might of the ravening fire and the winds' breath fury-stirred
Shall in very deed be refrained, would I of a surety essay—
Yea, I would pledge me, what though the surges should bar their way,
To bring their ship safe through, if the West blow fresh and strong.
But now is it time that I fare on the far track measureless-long
Unto my sisters—they which herein shall strengthen mine hand,—
And to where the ship's stern-hawsers be cast forth on to the strand, 840
That the men may at dawn take thought for the home-return to their land.'
She spake, and departed, and plunged from the height of the heaven mid swirls
Of the dark-blue sea; and she called to her sisters, the Nereïd-girls,
To come to her help: and the Maids of the Sea, so soon as they heard,
Gathered; and Thetis told them according to Hêrê's word;
And she sped them all to the sea Ausonian thence forthright.
And swifter herself than the flash of an eye, or the arrows of light
Of the sun, from the uttermost bourne when his chariot-wheels up-flame,
On through the water she fleeted and flashed, until she came
Unto the beach Aiaian of that Tyrrhenian main. 850
And she found by the galley the heroes: the shaft on the string did they strain
For their sport, and the javelin they hurled: but she stole unto Peleus' side,
And she touched his hand; for of old had he won her, his Goddess-bride.
But the eyes of the others were holden: to him did the Goddess appear,
Of his eyes only discerned; and she murmured low in his ear:
'No longer now on the beaches Tyrrhenian sitting abide,
But cast ye the hawsers of Argo loose with the dawning-tide,

Obeying your helper Hêrê's command; for at her behest
The Sea-maids, daughters of Nereus, all to the trysting have pressed,
Through the midst of the Rocks which the Wanderers hight your galley to speed 860
Safe; for thereby is your course, and the path by fate decreed.
But see that thou show me to none, when thine eyes my form discern
Mid the Nymphs, as we meet thee, lest hotter thou cause mine anger to burn
Than when erst thou didst kindle my spirit to anger swift and stern.'
She spake, and she plunged through abysses of sea, and he saw her no more:
And sharp pain smote him, who had not beheld her theretofore
Since the day she forsook her bridal bower and her couch at the first,
When for noble Achilles their babe into sudden anger she burst.
For the mortal flesh of her child did the Goddess encompass aye
Through the midst of the night with flames of fire, and day by day 870
With ambrosia anointed his tender frame, to make him thereby
Immortal, that loathly eld might come not his body anigh.
But Peleus from slumber upstarted, and saw his beloved son
Gasping mid flame; and he sent abroad, as he looked thereon,
A terrible cry in his folly exceeding. She heard him, and whirled
The babe aloft, and screaming adown on the earth she hurled:
And herself like a breath of the wind, or a dream at the breaking of sleep,
Forth of the hall flitted swiftly, and into the sea did she leap
In her anger: and never thereafter returned she thither again.
Amazement fettered his soul: but, for all his 'wildered pain, 880
To his comrades he spake forth all the commands of his Goddess-wife.
So these in the midst brake off, and refrained from the athlete-strife;
And the meat of the eventide and the earth-strawn beds they dight,
Whereon, having supped, as aforetime they laid them and slept through the night.
When Dawn 'gan sprinkle the sky from her chalice of light overbrimming,

Even then, when the wings of the West-wind the face of the waters were skimming,
They went up from the strand, and they sat on the thwarts, and aboard they drew
Blithely the anchor-stones from the deep, and in order due
The rest of the tackling all they lashed, and the sail spread wide
On high from the yard-arm, straining it taut with the sheets of hide. 890
Onward the fresh breeze wafted the ship: full soon they beheld
A fair isle flower-bestarred, where the Siren Destroyers dwelled,
Acheloïs' clear-voiced daughters, whose sweet songs wont to beguile
With their witchery whosoe'er cast anchor anigh that isle.
They were children whom lovely Terpsichorê, one of the Muses, bore
To the flood Acheloïs: and unto Dêmêter's daughter of yore,
When she yet was unwedded, the noble Persephonê, ministered they,
As in blended chorus they sang: but as birds in the latter day
Were they fashioned in part to behold, and as maidens in part they were.
And aye keeping watch from the harbour-cliffs overbeetling their 900 lair,
From many an one had they reft sweet home-return, whom they slew
With wasting consuming them. Lo, on a sudden to Argo's crew
Pealed from their lips their clear-sweet voice. From the galley now
Were they even at point to cast the hawser ashore from the prow;
But Thracian Orpheus matched him against that demon choir,
And the hands of Oiagrius' scion swept the Bistonian lyre;
And the march of the song o'er the rippling melody rang ever higher,
Till their ears were filled with the chiming and thrilled with the triumph of sound,
And the Sea-maids' shrilling chant in the storm of the lyre was drowned.
On flitted the ship, by the West-wind borne and the sighing swell 910
Upleaping astern; and bootless the weird song failed and fell:—
Not bootless all, for that Teleon's goodly son did leap
From the polished thwart, ere his comrades could stay him, into the deep,

Butes, whose soul was bewitched by the Sirens' clear-ringing breath;
And he swam through the purple surge to tread that strand of death.
Doomed wretch!—full soon had they robbed him there of his home-return;
But for him did the Cyprian Lady of Eryx in pity yearn,
And she snatched him away from the swirling wave, and safe she bore
Of her grace to dwell on the height Lilybœan on Sicily's shore.
So in anguish of spirit they left him: but perils worse than these 920
Awaited them—shipwrecking gulfs in the meeting-place of the seas.
For on this side Scylla's smooth sheer crag uptowering loomed,
And on that side Charybdis seething in ceaseless thunder boomed;
And otherwhere, swung by the mighty surge, met clanging and crashing
The Wandering Rocks, where afront were the spurts of fire outflashing
From the crests of the cliffs, o'er the crag red-glowing on high that burned.
And with smoke was the air all mistily shrouded: thou hadst not discerned
The beams of the sun. Then, albeit Hephaistus refrained from his toil,
With the hot uprushing steam did the sea yet bubble and boil.
Then Nereus' daughters from this side and that side the heroes met, 930
And Thetis the Goddess her hand to the blade of the rudder set;
And onward amidst of the Wandering Rocks the ship haled they.
And as when o'er the face of a summer sea the dolphins play
Circling around a ship as she runneth before the wind,
One while in front of her stern beheld, one while behind,
And alongside anon: and the shipmen be blithe for their gambolling;
So darted they up from the depths, so circled, a glimmering ring,
Round Argo the ship; and Thetis was steering her course through all.
And when now was the galley at point on the Wandering Rocks to fall,
Straightway they kilted their skirts above their snowy knees, 940

And high on the crests of the skerries, the breaking of madding seas,
To this side and that side they sped, far ranged apart to stand.
Sea-cataracts crashed on her beam, fierce surges on either hand
Higher upsoaring and higher o'er the rocks were bursting and streaming;
And these now towered to the welkin, as mountain-crags in seeming,
And now, whelmed down the abyss, on the Ocean's nethermost floor
Grounded they: over their crests did the triumphing rollers roar.
But the Nereïds, as maidens that flit to and fro on a sandy beach,
With parted gown-laps kilted about the waist of each,
Sport with a shapely rounded ball: one tosseth it on, 950
And her fellow receiveth; and high 'twixt heaven and earth is it gone
Sped from her hand to the welkin; and never it toucheth the ground,
So from one unto other's hand passed on did the galley bound
Through the air o'er the crests of the waves as they sped her, clear alway
Of the rocks; and around her the water upbelching was seething aye.
And the Fire-king's self on the ridge of a surf-lashed scaur was there,
While his sturdy hammer the weight of his massy shoulder bare.
Thence marvelling gazed Hephaistus: the bride of Zeus looked down
Where she stood in the sunlit heaven, and round Athênê had thrown
Her arms, in such faintness of fear, as she looked thereon, did she 960 cling.
And long as the space of a day is lengthened out in the spring,
So long was the time that they laboured, heaving with might and main
The ship through the thunderous-echoing rocks, till the wind again
Blew out the canvas; and onward they ran, and swiftly they sped
By the meads of Thrinakria's isle, where the kine of the Sun-god fed.
Then the Nymphs in the semblance of sea-mews down through abysses of brine

Plunged, when wrought was the hest of Zeus's Bride divine.
Then through the air did there come to the heroes a bleating of sheep,
And a lowing of kine full nigh to their ears floated over the deep.
There a shepherdess-goddess pastured the sheep o'er the dewy lea, 970
Phaëthusa—youngest of all the Sun-god's daughters was she—
Bearing a shepherd's crook of silver the while in her hand;
And Lampetiê herded the kine, and of mountain-brass was the wand
That she swayed as she followed their steps: and the heroes themselves espied
Those herds by the river that pastured, the sliding gleam beside,
O'er the plain and the water-meadow: was none amid all that herd
Dun-hued of hide, but all white even as milk appeared.
And a glory of golden horns on the stately heads of them shone.
So they passed in the daytime the Sun-god's herds, and as night drew on,
They went cleaving the great sea-gulf rejoicing, until once more 980
The Child of the Mist, the Dawning, flashed on their sea-path hoar.
Now fronting the mouth of the gulf Ionian lieth an isle
In the sea Keraunian, forest-mantled, with deep rich soil,
Whereunder the sickle, saith legend, is lying—vouchsafe me your grace,
Song-goddesses: loth do I speak of the tale of the olden days—
Wherewithal the strength of his father by Kronos was ruthlessly shorn:
(But of some is it called Demêter-of-Hades' Reaper of Corn:
For Demêter in that land wont to abide in the days of old,
And she taught the Titans to reap the cornfield's spears of gold,
Of her love unto Makris): the Sickle-land is it named therefrom, 990
The Phaeacians' hallowed nurse: and by lineage so these come
Of Ouranus' very blood, and his sons the Phaeacians be.
So Argo through much tribulation came from Thrinakria's sea
With the breeze to the land Phaeacian. With welcoming sacrifice
Alkinoüs the king and his people received them in kindly wise:
And all the city with riot of mirth o'er the far-driven ones
Rejoiced: thou hadst said that they joyed o'er their own re-given sons.

And the heroes themselves through the throng in gladness triumphant strode,
Even as though the heart of Haimonia-land they trod.
But now were they like to be donning their mail for the onset-cry, 1000
So mighty a host of Kolchian men appeared hard by,
Which down through the gorge of the Pontus, and on through the Crags Dark-blue
Had passed to the uttermost sea in quest of the hero-crew.
And Medea they chiefly were eager to hale to her father's house
Without parley, or threatened else that the war-yell dolorous
Should be raised for the slaughter-vengeance unrelenting and stern
Both then, and when led by Aiêtes their host should thereafter return.
Yet Alkinoüs the king restrained them amidst of their lust for the fray;
For he greatly desired without the clash of the strife to allay
The haughty-hearted feud betwixt the war-hosts twain. 1010
But the maiden in deadly fear besought again and again
The comrades of Aison's son; and again and again did she cling
With her hands round the knees of Arêtê, the wife of Alkinoüs the king:
'I kneel unto thee, O Queen!—be gracious, and yield me not now
To the Kolchians to hale to my father, if thou art of humankind, thou
Which livest by bread—of the hearts into folly that swiftliest rush,
Whom lightest transgression adown the abysses of ruin doth push,
Even so as my wisdom forsook me—nay, but it was not done
By reason of lust: be witness the sacred light of the sun:
Be witness the rites of Perseus' daughter, which haunteth the night, 1020
That not of my will with men of an alien land in flight
Did I haste from mine home; but horrible dread on my spirit wrought
To bethink me of fleeing thus when I sinned: other help there was not,
Neither hope. My maidenhead yet unmarred abideth and clean,
As it was in the halls of my father. Have pity upon me, O Queen;
And incline unto mercy the heart of thy lord! May the Deathless so
A life all-perfect on thee, all happiness bestow,
And sons, and the boast of a city unravaged of any foe!'

So bowed at Arêtê's knees did she weep, and so beseech ;
And thus to the heroes appealed she, turning to each after each : 103
'For your sakes, O ye chiefest of might, and for your emprise,
Am I hounded of terrors thus, even I, by whose device
Ye bowed the bulls to the yoke, and reaped that deadly swath
Of the Earth-born Men—even I, through whom on the homeward path
Ye shall bear the Fleece of Gold full soon to Haimonia's shore—
Even I, who have lost my country, my parents have lost evermore,
Have lost mine home, have lost all pleasures of life that I knew,
But to you have restored your country, your homes have restored unto you ;
And with rapture-litten eyes your parents again shall ye see.
But from me—a tyrannous god all happiness reft from me ; 104
And with alien men do I wander forlorn, an accursèd wight !
Dread ye the covenant-troth and the oaths : the Avenging Sprite
Of the suppliants dread, and the Gods' retribution, if ever I come
To Aiêtes' hands, amid outrage and agony meeting my doom !
No temple have I, neither tower of salvation, nor refuge beside :
You cast I before me, mine only shield in the perilous tide.
Hard hearts unrelenting and ruthless !—ye know not reverence, ye,
For the suppliant, though ye behold as I stretch despairingly
Mine hands to the knees of a stranger queen. Yet the Kolchian array,
One and all, had ye faced, when ye thirsted to bear the Fleece away : 105
Yea, Aiêtes the proud had ye faced:—but your manhood hath fainted, is flown
Now, when your foes from their helpers be sundered, a handful alone.'
So passioned and prayed Medea. To whomso she bowed in prayer,
Ever he heartened her, fain to assuage her anguished despair.
And their keen-whetted lances in wrathful-quivering hands did they shake,
And unscabbarded swords ; and they swore they would fail not her help nor forsake,

If the strange king touching the maiden unrighteous judgment spake.
And lo, mid the throng as they wrangled, the night, that putteth to sleep
The labours of men, stole o'er them, and all the earth did she steep
In the balm of her quiet: but not on the maid fell slumber's peace 1060
One whit, but her heart in her bosom for anguish writhed without cease.
Even as when a toiling woman windeth her thread
Through the night, and her fatherless children around her be moaning for bread,
For that widowed she is; and adown her cheeks stream ever the tears
As she thinketh upon this dreary lot that hath darkened her years;
Even so were the maid's cheeks wet, and her heart evermore in her breast
On the anguish-thorn impaled was writhing in wild unrest.
But amidst of the city the palace within, as in days gone by,
Alkinoïs the king, and the lady of queenliest majesty,
The wife of Alkinoïs, lay in their bed, and many a word 1070
Through the darkness in counsel they spake of the maiden; and thus to her lord
With loving and earnest speech made answer the queen, and she said:
'Yea, O my beloved—yet save, I beseech thee, the woe-stricken maid
From the Kolchians, showing a grace to the Minyan men. For anigh
To our isle lieth Argos; the men of Haimonia dwell hard by.
But Aiêtes—he dwelleth not even anear, and nought do we know
Of Aiêtes: we hear but his name. But the maiden's awful woe,
When she made supplication, mine heart within my breast hath torn.
Yield her not up to the Kolchians, my king, to her sire to be borne.
In madness she sinned at the first, when she gave him the charm that 1080 should tame
The bulls; and with wrong to amend that wrong—ay, ofttimes the same

In our sinning we do!—she straightway essayed; and, shrinking in fear
From her proud sire's tyrannous wrath, she fled. Now the man, as I hear,
This Jason, is bound by mighty oaths, which his own lips said,
When he pledged him to make her, his halls within, his wife true-wed.
Wherefore, beloved, constrain not Aison's son to forswear
His oath, of thy will, nor consent that the sire from the daughter should tear
Her life in the rage of his soul amid pangs unendurably keen:
For cruelly jealous against their daughters are fathers, I ween.
What vengeance did Nykteus wreak on Antiopê lovely-faced! 1090
What woes were of Danaê borne on the wide sea's desolate waste
Through her sire's mad rage! And of late, nor afar, it came to pass
That wanton-tyrannous Echetus thrust the goads of brass
Through the eyes of his daughter: and wasted and worn by her woeful doom,
She is grinding the grain of brass in a hovel's dungeon-gloom.'
So spake she beseeching; and softened so was the heart of the king
By the words of his wife, and he spake in such wise answering:
'Arêtê, the Kolchian men would I even, in harness arrayed,
Drive forth of the land, for a grace to the heroes, to save yon maid.
But I fear to set the unswerving justice of Zeus at nought. 1100
Nor were this well done, to contemn, according to this thy thought,
Aiêtes:—of kinglier king than Aiêtes may no man tell.
Yea, war, if he list, shall he bring against Hellas, afar though he dwell.
Wherefore 'tis meet and right that the sentence be spoken of me
That in all men's eyes shall be best, and I will not hide it from thee:—
If the damsel be virgin yet, I decree that the daughter be led
To the father: but if she minister unto a husband's bed,
I will part not from husband wife; nor, if haply she bear 'neath her zone
His offspring, to foes will I yield up a child of Aison's son.'
So spake he, and round him straight did the veil of slumber close. 1110

But she laid up his wisdom her heart within; and she straightway uprose
From her couch in the palace: the women her handmaids with hurrying feet
Came, eagerly tending their lady the Queen with service meet.
And she silently summoned her herald, and spake in his ears her request
To be instant in bidding Aison's son, at his Queen's behest,
To wed with the maiden, nor more with Alkinoüs the king to plead;
For himself to the Kolchians would go and pronounce the doom decreed,
That, if she were virgin yet, he would render her up to be led
To her father: but if she ministered unto a husband's bed,
Not then would he sever the wife from the love of the lawfully wed. 1120
So spake she, and forth of the hall the feet of the herald sped
Unto Jason, Arêtê the Queen's fair-omened message to bring,
And Alkinoüs' counsel, the word of the god-revering king.
And the heroes he found by the ship in their war-gear abiding awake
In the haven of Hyllus, anigh to the city; and out he spake
The Queen's whole message, and each man's spirit was gladness-stirred,
Forasmuch as he spake in their ears an exceeding welcome word.
Straightway they mingled the bowl to the Gods that abide for aye;
And with reverent hands to the altar the victim-sheep drew they.
And the selfsame night for the maiden prepared they the couch 1130
of the bride
In a hallowed cave, where of old time Makris wont to abide,
The child of the Honey-lord, Aristaius, whose wisdom discerned
The toils of the bees, and the wealth of the labour of olives learned.
And she was the first that received and in sheltering bosom bore
The child Nysaian of Zeus, on Eubœa's Abantian shore.
And with honey she moistened his lips, where the dew of life was dried
When Hermes bare him out of the fire. But Hêrê espied,
And from all the isle that Nymph in her fierceness of anger she drave.
Wherefore she dwelt far thence in the holy Phaeacian cave,

And blessing and weal beyond word to the folk of the land she gave. 114
Even there did they spread them the mighty couch and thereover they laid
The glittering Golden Fleece, that the marriage so might be made
Honoured, a song in the mouths of bards. Flowers manifold-fair
The Nymphs in their snowy bosoms gathered, and thitherward bare.
And a splendour like as of fire glowed round those shapes divine,
Such glory-gleams from the golden tufts did shimmer and shine.
Sweet longing lit up their eyes: howbeit did awe withhold
Each one, though she yearned to lay but her hand on the wonder of gold.
And of that bright throng the river Aigaius' daughters were some,
And some on the crests of Melitê dwelt in their mountain-home; 115
And forest-glen Nymphs of the plains were some: for Zeus's bride,
Even Hêrê, had sent them for honour to Jason's marriage-tide.
That cave is to this day named Medea's Sacred Grot,
Forasmuch as to wedlock's solemnities there these twain they brought,
When the odorous-sweet fine linen they spread. And the heroes without
Guarded them war-spear in hand, lest haply for battle the rout
Of their foes unawares should set on them, or ever the rites were sped.
And with sprays of bounteous leaf did they wreathe each man his head;
And in harmony all, while clear the harp of Orpheus rang,
At the entering-in of the cave the bridal hymn they sang. 116
Yet not in Alkinoüs' home the hero Aison's son,
But in halls of his father, the goal of marriage full fain had won,
When home he returned to Iolkos, and so withal was the mind
Of Medea, but hard compulsion constrained them now to be joined.
But even as never the tribes of the woe-stricken children of earth
May tread full-footed the path of delight, but still with our mirth
Hand in hand goeth pacing affliction bitter as gall,
So these, when melted with rapture of love were their souls, were thrall
Unto dread, what things of Alkinoüs' sentence should haply befall.

So soon as the dawn with her beams ambrosial climbed heaven's
height,
And scattered the gloomy night through the welkin, and laughed
in her light
The island-beaches, and all the paths through the plains that wound
Dew-gleaming afar, and awoke in the streets a murmur of sound,
And her folk were astir through the town, and astir was the
Kolchian host
In their camp far off on the bounds of the Makrian sea-ringed coast.
Then straightway Alkinoüs hied him, by covenant-plight to hold,
To utter his purpose as touching the maiden. His sceptre of gold,
His staff of justice, he bare, wherewith to the multitude
Of the city were meted the statutes with righteousness endued.
And beside him, in ordered ranks arrayed in their harness of fight, 1180
Squadron by squadron were marching Phaeacia's chiefest of might.
And forth from the tower-girt city in throngs the women broke
To gaze on the heroes; and men therewithal of the country-folk
Met them, which heard the tidings; for Hêrê afar had sped
A rumour that erred not: and one a lamb unblemished led,
The choice of the sheep: with a heifer unlaboured one drew nigh;
And others were ranging the earthen jars of wine hard by
To mingle. The sacrifice-smoke was wafted far away.
Came women with webs of costly labour, as women may,
And with trinkets of gold, and with manifold ornaments therebeside, 1190
Such gifts as be wont to be brought to the newly-wedded bride.
And they marvelled beholding the heroes' stature and comeliness,
As they towered o'er the throng, and Oiagrius' scion amidst of
the press,
As in time to the harmony-ringing lyre and the chanted strain
Ever he smote and anon with his glittering sandal the plain.
And the Nymphs all blending their voices, when marriage-notes
chimed on the string,
Uplifted the lovely bridal chant, and anon would they sing
Alone and unprompted the song, as the wreaths of their dances
they twined.
O Hêrê, of thee was it done; for thou puttedst it into the mind

Of Arêtê to tell Alkinoüs' prudent word of the night. 1200
But so soon as the king had pronounced the decree of unswerving right,
And when now was the marriage accomplished proclaimed in all men's ears,
Then took he heed that it so should abide: no deadly fears
Touched him, nor Aiêtes' terrible wrath might his purpose shake;
But he held by the word he had plighted, the oath that he would not break.
And when now were the Kolchians ware that in vain they besought him to swerve,
And when now he commanded them—'Either obey my decree and observe,
Or forth of my havens and land afar shall your galleys sail';—
Then in that hour for their own king's threatenings 'gan they quail,
And besought him amongst his folk to receive them. So there in the land 1210
Long time with the people Phaeacian dwelt the Kolchian band,
Till the Bacchiad lords, which by lineage sprang from Ephyrê,
As the years passed, settled amidst them, and they to the isle oversea
Sailed: thence to the Thunder-hills of Abantian men must they go,
And therefrom to the folk Nestaian, and on to Oricum so.
But the river of time ere then down many a year must flow.
But still to the altars the yearly sacrifice men bring
For the Fates and the Nymphs in the fane of Apollo the Shepherd-king,
Which altars Medea builded. And gifts, ere they passed o'er the wave,
Full many Alkinoüs gave them, and many Arêtê gave. 1220
Thereafter withal on Medea Phaeacian handmaid-thralls
Twelve did the Queen bestow, to follow her forth of her halls.
On the seventh day sailed they away from Drepanê. Came with the morn
A fresh breeze sent of Zeus: and so by the wind's breath borne
Onward and onward they ran. Howbeit not yet on the strand
Of Achaïa by doom of the God might they tread, that hero-band,

Till yet they had toiled in the uttermost parts of Libya-land.
And now by the bay that is named the Ambracian Gulf had they sped,
And now had they left the Aetolian land with sail wide spread;
And thereafter the isles in the narrow Echinad strait that lie; 1230
And Pelops' land in the offing but now might they dimly descry:
Even then were they snatched away by the North-wind's baleful blast
In mid course: on to the Libyan sea did it sweep them fast
Nine nights together, and days as many, until they had run
Into the Syrtis afar, wherefrom returning is none
For ships, when a storm-driven galley within that gulf shall be found.
For on every hand be shoals, and the tangled weed all round
Of the deep, and the salt foam-scum over all doth mantle and cling.
Into haziest distance stretcheth the land: no living thing
There moveth that creepeth or flieth. On that drear coast by the 1240
sweep
Of the flood-tide—for ofttimes the outrushing ebb draweth back to the deep
Far off from the land, and again with gurgling rush and roar
Cometh bursting over his beaches—afar on the innermost shore
Were they suddenly thrust, that the keel's full depth was covered no more.
Then leapt they forth of the ship, and in trouble of soul did they gaze
On the dimness, the long low backs of the land all formless haze
Far stretching away unbroken. Nor stream nor spring they espied,
Neither path, nor, how distant soe'er, a steading thereon they descried
Of herdmen, but all the landskip in dead calm folded lay.
And in sore vexation of spirit did hero to hero say: 1250
'What manner of land is this? Whither now hath the tempest's sway
Hurled us? Would God we had dared, all reckless of deadly dismay,
To rush right on through the path of the rocks of the grim sea-gate!
Verily better it were, had we overleapt the fate
Of Zeus, in daring a deed of heroic mood to have died!

But now, what thing should we do, which be prisoned by winds to abide
Here, though but a little span we continue?—in such drear wise
The plain of the limitless land stretcheth up to the lowering skies.'
So cried they: thereafter in utter despair for their evil case
Ankaius the helmsman spake with anguish-darkened face: 1260
'Yea verily, ghastliest doom hath undone us. Escape there is not
From destruction: for us but remaineth to suffer the cruellest lot,
Which have fallen on this desolation; yea, even though a breath there should be
Of air from the land, forasmuch as nought save shoals do I see,
Afar as I gaze o'er the waters around; and scantly the brine
Overscaleth the hoary sands in foam-fretted line upon line.
Yea, and our god-built ship had to shards been wretchedly torn
Long since far off from the shore, but that out of the sea was it borne
By the flood-tide's self uplifted, and high on the land was it thrown.
But the tide now raceth aback to the deep, and foam alone 1270
Whereon saileth no keel, rolleth on, and but thinly the earth hath it veiled.
Wherefore, I trow, all hope of our sailing hath utterly failed—
All hope of return! Let another man show sea-craft herein.
Lo, there is the helm—whosoever is fain our deliverance to win,
Let him sit in my seat. But little doth Zeus desire, I wot,
To crown with a day of return the toils we have suffered and wrought.'
So spake he, weeping the while; and the others agreed thereto,
Even all which had knowledge of ships; and all the hearts of them grew
Chilly and numb, and over their cheeks was paleness shed.
And even as, like unto lifeless spectres of folk long dead, 1280
Men creep through the streets of a town, and despairing the issue await
Of famine or leaguer of war, or a tempest unspeakably great
Which hath swept o'er the land, and hath flooded the labours of oxen untold;
Or when great gouts of blood from the images sweating have rolled,

Or when from the shrines of the temple ghostly bellowings wail,
Or the sun o'er the day's mid noontide draweth the night's black veil
Out of heaven, and the glittering stars come forth in splendour pale;
So stricken, the chieftains then by the strand's verge endless-wide
Roamed loitering on. And at one stride came dark eventide.
And piteously around each other their arms did they throw 1290
With weeping farewell, that each from his fellow apart might go
To die, and might fling him adown on the sand to wait for the end.
So this way and that way to choose their couch of the night did they wend;
And each in the folds of his mantle enshrouded his head, and they lay
Fasting and thirsting there through the livelong night and the day
Awaiting a piteous death. And the handmaids huddled in fear
Round Aiêtes' daughter apart shrilled lamentation drear.
And as when, of their mother forsaken, fledglings shrilly cheep,
Which have fallen to earth from a cleft in a sheer scaur's precipice-steep,
Or as when 'twixt the low-browed banks of Pactolus' fair-flowing 1300 stream
The swans are upraising their song, and the meadow of dewy gleam
Murmureth round, and murmur the river's ripples fair;
So the handmaidens bowing low in the dust their golden hair,
All through the night were uplifting their pitiful wail of despair.
And now out of life had they slidden, had vanished from human ken,
And the name and the fame of them never more had been heard among men,
Those noblest of heroes!—their task unaccomplished had ended then:
Howbeit the Heroine-nymphs had pity of them as they pined
In helpless despair, the Warders of Libya, they that did find
Athênê, what time from the head of her father, in battle-gear 1310
All flashing, she sprang, and the new-born bathed they in Triton's mere.

The noon of the day it was, and the sun upon Libya-land
Burned with his fiercest beams : by Aison's son did they stand,
And the mantle-shroud from his head with soft light touch drew they.
But the hero, downward drooping his eyes, thence turned them away,
For awe of the shapes divine : but with gentle words of cheer
With open face did they speak unto him in his 'wildered fear :
'Ill-starred one, wherefore so grievously smitten art thou with despair ?
We know how ye fared for the Golden Fleece : of your toils we be ware,
Even all the strength-overmastering labours on land that ye proved, 132
And all ye endured on the face of the watery deep as ye roved.
The Solitary Ones of the land, the Heroines, are we,
Warders and daughters of Libya, which speak which our voices to thee.
Up then : let thy spirit not thus to affliction of misery yield,
And uprouse thy comrades, so soon as the steeds of the car swift-wheeled
Of Poseidon, by Amphitritê loosed from the yoke, run free.
Unto your mother the nursing-debt then render ye
For all her travail, when long she bare you her womb within.
So haply again unto hallowed Achaia-land shall ye win.'
So spake they, and vanished, there as they stood, in the self- 133
same place
Where murmured their voices close in his ear : and with startled gaze
Staring around, on the earth sat Jason, and cried in amaze :
'Be gracious, ye glorious Goddesses, lone in the desert which dwell !
Yet what this word of our home-coming meaneth I wot not well.
I will gather my comrades, and tell them, and learn what token is this
Of escape :—in the multitude of counsellors safety there is.'
Then he leapt to his feet, and he shouted afar o'er the desolate shore,
All dust-begrimed, as a lion that seeking his mate doth roar

Up and down through the forest-gloom : deep glens through many
a hill
Far off at the sound of his voice's thunder shuddering thrill, 1340
And tremble the oxen that roam the meads with exceeding fear,
And the herders of kine : but never a whit dismaying to hear
Was the hero's cry to his friends when the voice of his shouting
they heard.
And they gathered with down-drooped eyes to his side, and they
sat at his word
Sore troubled anigh where lay the ship ; and the women withal
With the heroes mingled sat ; and he spake, and he told them all :
'Hearken, O friends, for in this mine affliction Goddesses three,
In vesture of goatskins girded about, from neck unto knee
Overdrooping their shoulders and waists, as maidens of earth to
behold,
Stood over mine head full nigh, and they drew my mantle's fold 1350
Away from mine head with fingers light, and they bade me arise
From my couch of despair, bade rouse you up in the selfsame wise.
And they bade us to render our mother the nursing-debt again—
Seeing that long in her womb she bare us with travail-pain—
Whensoever the steeds of the swift-wheeled car of the Lord of
the Sea
Amphitritê should loose from the yoke. Howbeit it is not in me
To divine what their prophecy meaneth. They named them,
that stranger-band,
Heroines, daughters of Libya, and Warders of the Land.
Yea, whatsoever toils we endured in our journeying
By land or by sea, said they, they were ware of everything. 1360
No longer thereafter I saw them in place, but there came between
A mist or a cloud—they appeared, and lo! they were no more seen.'
He spake, and they marvelled all such tale to hear him tell.
Then to the Minyan men a most strange wonder befell :
For out of the sea to the land did a horse gigantic bound
With golden mane far-streaming that tossed his shoulders around.
And with one swift stamp he shook from his shoulders the briny
spray,

And onward he galloped with feet like the blast of the wind: straightway
Unto the throng of his comrades did Peleus rejoicing say:
'The steed of the car of the Lord of the Sea!—unyoked hath he been 1370
Even but now by the hands of his dear-loved wife, I ween.
And our mother—none other is this, I divine, than the good ship there,
Argo; for verily us within her womb she bare
With grievous anguish of travail groaning unceasingly.
Her therefore with stalwart strength and with tireless shoulders we
Will uplift, and afar o'er the wastes of the sandy land from the shore
Will we bear her, where yonder steed hath with swift feet sped before.
For he will not, he, sink into the earth, but his hoof-prints shall go
Pointing the way for us inland afar from the sea, I trow.'
So did he speak: of his keen-witted counsel were all they fain. 1380
Lo, this is the song of the Muses, and I but sing their strain,
The Pierides' servant; and this true tale in mine ears hath been told
That ye, O mightiest far of the sons of the kings of old,
By your manhood and might o'er the sands of Libya's desert drear
Bare high over earth your galley and all her voyaging-gear,
On your shoulders laid, yea, bare her through long days two and ten,
And nights as many. That cup of affliction and travail then,
What tongue could tell it, which these in their toil filled up full-brim?
Of a truth of the blood of the Deathless they were, such labour grim
Did they take on them, onward driven and on by Necessity's goad, 1390
Till afar mid the ripples of Trito's mere how triumphantly strode,
How gladly adown from their stalwart shoulders they set their load!
Then rushing, like unto hounds in the wild hunt's frenzy-burst,
Sought they a spring, for that now was there added parching thirst
Unto all their affliction and manifold anguish; nor toiled they in vain
Wandering there; for lo, they came to the sacred plain
Where but yesterday Ladon the Serpent of Libya in Atlas' garden

Kept watch o'er the Apples of Gold; and the Nymphs around
their warden,
The Hesperides, rested never, chanting their lovely song.
But now by the arrows of Herakles stricken he lay along 1400
By the trunk of the apple-tree: only the tip of his tail had strength
To quiver yet, but adown from his head, through all the length
Of his dark chine, lifeless he lay. Where the arrows had left in his
blood
The bitter gall of the Hydra of Lerna, a swarming brood
Of flies o'er the venom-festering wounds of him crawled and clung.
And thereby the Hesperides over their golden heads had flung
Their white arms, shrilling their wail. And the wanderers suddenly
drew
Anear, and to dust and to earth straightway, when the hero-crew
Came hastily on, did they turn even there. But Orpheus was ware
Of the portent divine, and he stood, and he spake to the Nymphs 1410
in prayer:
'Divine Ones, lovely and kindly, O Queens, be gracious ye,
Whether amongst the Heavenly Goddesses numbered ye be,
Or the Earthly, or whether they name you the Lone Ones, Nymphs
divine,
Come, O ye Nymphs, come, daughters of Ocean's sacred line!
Appear ye in manifest form to our longing eyes, and show
Some spring gushing forth from the rock, some sacred upwelling
flow
From the bosom of Earth, O shapes divine, that the thirst which
doth burn
Our tongues without cease may be quenched; and if ever again we
return
Unto Achaia-land in our weariful voyaging,
Then, as to the chiefest in heaven, to you which have done this 1420
thing
Gifts and libations and feasts with grateful love will we bring.'
So spake he, praying with earnest voice; and they from anear
Pitied their pain. And first did they cause green grass to appear
From the earth, and above the grass rose saplings tall, and these

Thereafter in fulness of bloom grew up into fair young trees:
Tall-standing and straight, high up from the face of the earth they towered.
In a poplar was Hesperê veiled, Erythêis an elm embowered,
And Aiglê a sacred willow. And out of the stems of them, lo!
Appeared they, and like as before they had been, so again did they show,
A marvel exceeding great: and Aiglê silence brake, 1430
And with gentle words in their longing ears she answered and spake:
'Of a surety for blessing to you and deliverance out of your toil,
Hitherward came but now one ruthless and shameless, to spoil
Our guardian serpent of life; and the Goddesses' apples of gold
He plucked, and he bare them away, and he left us sorrowful-souled.
For there came yestreen a man most fell in wanton despite,
Grim-shapen, whose eyes 'neath his scowling brows flashed terrible light,
A pitiless man: in a monster lion's fell untanned,
Raw hide, was he clad, with a stubborn olive-wood staff in his hand,
And a bow, with the arrows whereof he shot yon dragon dead. 1440
And he came, he also, as one that afoot overland hath sped,
Thirst-parched: and questing for water with diligent haste he sought
Through all this place—but, I ween, he was like to behold it not!
Howbeit a certain rock by the mere Tritonian stood:
This, or of his own device, or a God wrought so on his mood,
Did he smite with his foot, and forth did the water in full burst flow.
Then down to the earth on his hands and his breast he bowed him low;
And out of the rifted rock an unspeakable draught he swilled,
Till his mighty maw, down-stooped like a beast of the field, he had filled.'
So spake she; and they right glad thence hasted, until they came 1450
To the place where Aiglê had told of the spring; and they found the same.

And as when earth-burrowing ants swarm round their narrow pit,
All hurrying to and fro, or when clustering flies, that have lit
Where lieth a drop of the honey sweet, a tiny gout,
Insatiate-eager are thronging, so in a huddled rout
The Minyans round that rock-spring crowded on every side.
And with wet lips thus in his gladness hero to hero cried:
'O strange!—how hath Herakles saved his companions forspent with stress
Of thirst, though afar he were! Would God that he yet might bless
The eyes of us finding him faring on through the wilderness!' 1460
Then shouted in answer they which were ready-dight for the deed.
And they parted, and this way and that way questing the lost did they speed.
For the tracks of the hero by winds of the night had been wholly effaced,
As they drifted the sand. And away did Boreas' two sons haste,
Putting trust in their wings; and Euphêmus trusting his feet flying fast,
And Lynkeus the piercing glance of his eyes afar to cast:
And Kanthus, the fifth of the searchers, darted away with the rest,
Whom the doom of the Gods and his manfulness drave to essay that quest,
That of Herakles' mouth for certain tidings he so might inquire
Where he left Polyphemus, Eilatus' son; for with earnest desire 1470
Was he fain to ask of the hero concerning his lost friend's fate:—
But he mid the Mysians had builded a city glorious and great;
Then yearning for home came o'er him, and seeking Argo he passed
Far over the mainland, until he came to the land at the last
Of the sea-board Chalybans: there 'neath the mastering doom did he fall,
And there up-piled is his grave-mound under a poplar tall
Facing the sea. But Lynkeus deemed that he spied that day
Over measureless spaces of land lone-faring and far away

Herakles—saw him as one that hath seen or hath thought he hath seen
The moon, when the month is young, through mist-veils floating 1480
between.
To his comrades returned he, and told them that quester thereafter should see
The hero no more as he journeyed. In like wise came those three,
Even Euphêmus the swift of foot, and the scions twain
Of the Thracian Wind of the North, having toiled and striven in vain.
But, Kanthus, in Libya thee did the fell Fates bring to thine end.
Upon pasturing flocks didst thou light; and the shepherd, that wont to tend
Those sheep, in defending them smote thee, when thou thereof wast fain
To take for thy comrades' need, and there of his hand was thou slain
By the cast of a stone; for in sooth no weakling there kept ward,
Kaphaurus, the grandson of Phœbus, Lykoreia's Lord, 1490
And of fair Akakallis the princess, whom Minos drave from her home
In Libya to dwell, when the fruit of a God was found in her womb,
His daughter she; and a glorious son unto Phœbus she bare,
Amphithemis namèd, and Garamas—twofold the names of him were.
And a Nymph, the Lady of Trito's Lake, did Amphithemis wed;
And Nasamon's might and Kaphaurus the strong she bare to his bed,
Even him which smote down Kanthus, defending his sheep as he fought.
Yet from the chieftains' avenging hands escaped he not,
When they learned what deed he had done; and the Minyans sought their dead,
And they took up the corse, and they laid him to rest in the strait 1500
earth-bed,
Mourning, and took thereafter the slayer's sheep for a prey.
There also Mopsus, Ampykus' son, in the selfsame day
Did a pitiless fate cut off. Stern doom might he nowise shun

By his prophecy-lore, forasmuch as avoidance of death is there none.
For a dread snake lay mid the sand from the mid-noon sun to hide,
Too sluggish to strike of his will at such as would turn aside;
Nor yet would he dart full face upon one that in fear shrank back.
Yet into whomso but once he should spit his venom black,
Of all that on life-sustaining earth draw living breath,
Not a cubit's length should be left of his path to the mansion of Death, 1510
No, not though the Healer God—if this I may say, nor sin—
Should medicine him, if only his teeth should have grazed but the skin.
For when over Libya flying godlike Perseus came—
Who is also Eurymedon; so did his mother name his name—
As unto the king the Gorgon's head new-severed he bore,
Whatsoever to earth dropped down of the dark-red gouts of gore,
All quickened, and serpents thereof of the selfsame brood did there spring.
Now Mopsus pressed on the ridge of the spine of the deadly thing,
Setting his left foot-sole thereupon; and the beast in his pain
Writhed round it: the flesh 'twixt ankle and calf in his fangs hath he ta'en, 1520
And he tare it, the while Medea and all her handmaids fled
In affright. Howbeit the seer was handling, nothing adread,
The bleeding wound; for the pain not grievously vexed his soul.
Ah wretch!—for already a numbness of deadly slumber stole
Unstringing his sinews: a thick mist flooded his eyes all round.
Straightway his burdened limbs all helplessly sank to the ground,
And chill did he grow. And his comrades, and Aison's son, amazed
At the strokes fast-falling of doom, on the dead man thronging gazed.
Yet not for a little space, albeit but newly dead,
Might he lie in the sun, for that fast through his flesh 'gan corruption to spread 1530
From the venom: the very hair from the skin like slime was cast.
Therefore they straightway delved them a deep trench, labouring fast

With mattocks of brass; and in mourning thereafter their hair did they rend,
Both they and the maidens, bewailing the dead man's pitiful end.
Round the hero meetly entombed then thrice in their warrior-gear
Marched they, and over his grave the earth-mound high did they rear.
But when now they were gone aboard of the ship, and the South-wind blew
Over the sea, they must needs make guess of the strait wherethrough
They should win forth out of Tritônis' mere; neither any device
Long had they, but all day long were they drifting in aimless wise.
And as writheth a serpent along his crooked path, when beat
The rays of the sun on the land, and scorch him with fiercest heat,
And with hissing to this side and that side he turneth his head, and his eyne,
Like unto sparks that leap from the furnace, glitter and shine
For his fury, until to his lair through a cleft of the rock he may creep;
So Argo, seeking a mouth of the mere, a fairway deep,
Long time tacked to and fro. Then Orpheus suddenly spake,
That Apollo's massy tripod forth of the ship they should take,
And propitiate the Gods of the land therewith for their home-going's sake.
So went they, and set Apollo's goodly gift on the shore.
Then stood before them one, the form of a youth who bore,
Even Triton the Wide-dominioned. From earth he uplifted a clod,
And he held it forth for his Stranger's Gift; and spake the God:
'Receive it, my friends: no gift exceeding goodly to see
Here have I now to give unto them which seek unto me.
But and if ye inquire touching this sea's paths—as many a time
Is the need of men whose journeyings pass through an alien clime—
I will tell you, seeing Poseidon hath made me to understand
This sea, for that he is my father, and I am the king of the land
By the sea—if perchance to your ears from afar Eurypylus' name,
Son of the Land of the Beasts of Ravin, from Libya came.'

He spake, and Euphêmus outstretched his hands right joyfully
That gift of the clod to receive, and answering thus spake he:
'If thou peradventure of Atthis and Minos' sea dost know,
O hero, to us who inquire the truth unfailing show.
For not of our will have we hitherward come, but the tempests' might
Hath hurled us afar, on the borders of this your land to light:
And our galley, shoulder-uplifted, a weary burden, I wis,
Through the desert we bare to the waves of thy mere. But we know not this,
Whereby we shall sail thereout to win unto Pelops' land.' 1570
He spake, and afar that other pointed, outstretching his hand
To the sea, and the mouth of the deep-channelled mere, and he spake the word:
'Lo, yonder lieth the path to the sea, where the deeps unstirred
Darkest are gleaming: on either hand roll breakers white
Green-glimmering under their shivering crests, and on forthright
Through the lane of the breakers a straight path lieth to win from the mere.
And yon sea misty in distance beyond Crete stretcheth clear
To the sacred land of Pelops. But rightward still steer ye,
When forth of the mere ye have thrust, and ye ride on the swell of the sea.
And so long speed ye onward your course, close-hugging the land, 1580
Till ye come to an inland-trending gulf; and then shall ye stand
Boldly across to the ness where endeth the sweep of the shore
Beyond. Therefrom shall your course be perplexity-troubled no more.
Now pass on your way rejoicing: let no man grieve the while
That your limbs must labour, while yet ye have strength of your youth for toil.'
With kindly counsel he spake; and they hied them aboard once more,
With intent to get them forth of the mere by toil of the oar.
On sped they with eager purpose: and now did Triton take
On his shoulder the mighty tripod; and now did he enter the lake,

And they saw :—but thereafter did no man mark how he vanished
from sight
With the tripod, anigh though he were. Then each man's heart
grew light,
For that now for their helping had met them one of the Gods ever-
blest.
And they cried unto Aison's son to take of their sheep the best,
And to sacrifice to the God, and to chant the hymn of praise.
Then straightway he chose it in haste, and the victim on high did
he raise,
And slew it there on the stern, and the sacrifice-prayer he cried :
'Thou God, who hast manifested thyself on the mere's lone
side,—
Whether Triton the great sea-marvel thou be, or whether thy name
Be Phorkys or Nereus mid Sea-nymphs of Nereus' loins which
came,—
Be gracious thou, and vouchsafe heart-gladdening home-return.'
So praying he severed the throat of the victim, and down
from the stern
Mid the waves did he cast it. Out of the deep yet again did he rise:
In his own true form as a God was he manifest unto their eyes.
And as when one traineth a fleet-foot steed for the broad race-course,
Grasping the flowing mane of the hest-obeying horse,
Running lightly beside him, while high he is arching his neck in
his pride,
And followeth on, and the gleaming bit, as from side to side
He rolleth it 'twixt his champing jaws, is clashing and ringing ;
Even so with his hand to the keel of hollow Argo clinging,
Seaward he thrust her ; and all his form, from the stately crown
Of his head, over back and waist and navel, thus far down
Was his wondrous shape even such as the Gods ever-blessèd are.
But down from his loins the tail of a sea-beast lengthened far
Forking to this side and that, and he lashed the face of the tide
With his spines, which parted below into fins outcurving wide
In fashion like to the horns of the moon when the month is new.
Onward he drave her, till sped from the thrust of his hand she flew

To the sea : then sank he mid fathomless depths, and the heroes all
Shouted, whose eyes beheld that awesome marvel befall.
There is the haven of Argo, and there are the signs of her stay : 1620
There stand to Poseidon and Triton altars unto this day ;
Forasmuch as for that day tarried they there. But with sail outspread
At the dawning again before the West-wind's breath they fled.
And ever they kept the while that desert land to the right.
On the morning thereafter the ness they beheld, and the long sea-bight
Inland-trending beyond that seaward-jutting ness.
Then straightway the West-wind failed them, but blew the breath no less
Of the cloudless South ; and their hearts rejoiced, in the sail as it sighed.
And the sun went down, and uprose the star of the folding-tide,
Which bringeth from labour rest unto ploughmen toil-fordone. 1630
Even then, when the wind died down as the darkling night drew on,
Furled they the idle sail, and the mast exceeding tall
They lowered, and now to the toil of the polished oar did they fall
All through the night and the day, and, when failed the light of the day,
Through the night thereafter, till rugged Karpathos far away
Welcomed them : thence did they shape their course unto where rose high
Crete above all the rest of the isles in the sea which lie.
There Talos, the man of brass, from the stubborn scaur as he tore
Rock-shards, withstood them from making the hawsers fast to the shore,
When came to the roadstead of Dirkê's haven the sea-worn ones. 1640
Now he was the last of the brazen stock of the Ash-tree's sons :
In the days of the Sons of the Gods none other on earth abode.
Him on Europa to guard her island Kronion bestowed ;
And thrice round Crete each day with his brazen feet he strode.
Now in all the rest of his body and limbs was he fashioned of brass
Which might not be broken : howbeit a blood-red vein there was
By his ankle beneath the sinew, and guarded therewithin

Were the issues of life and of death by nought save a film of skin.
And the men were with travail outworn, yet aloof from the land drew they
Their ship with the backward sweep of the oars, in exceeding dismay. 1650
To the outsea now from Crete had they turned them in plight forlorn,
Tormented with thirst, and by all their travail-pain outworn;
But, even as they turned them, Medea spake to the hero-crew:
'Hear me: alone, I ween, can I for your helping subdue
Yon man, whosoever he be, though fashioned of brass all through
Be his body, except he have life everlasting added thereto.
But consent ye to keep hereby your galley beyond the flight
Of his stones, till he yield unto me his overmastered might.'
Then backed they the galley, beyond the cast of his arm, to rest
On the oars; and they waited to see what counsel, of all unguessed, 1660
She would bring to pass. Then on either side of her cheeks did she hold
For a veil before her face her purple mantle's fold.
Then up to the deck she went, and her hand did Aison's son
Grasp in his own, and from thwart to thwart so led her on.
And the spell-chant raised she: the Fates with singing invoked she there,
Devourers of souls, swift hounds of Hades, through all the air
Which be hovering ever, and swoop on the doomed the living among.
Bowing the knee unto these three times she invoked them with song,
And thrice with prayer; and with soul unto mischief shapen she cast
The glance of the evil eye upon Talos, his vision to blast. 1670
And her teeth gnashed fury accursèd upon him, the arms of her waved
Beckonings of doom, as of one that in frenzy of hatred raved.
Zeus Father, awe as a wind on my spirit bloweth chill,
Seeing how by disease not alone, nor by wounds, the doom of ill
Meeteth us, yea, how one from afar shall work our bane!
Even as he, though brazen, yielded yet to be slain
By the might of Medea the sorceress. Then, as he heaved on high
The massy rocks to withstand them from coming the haven anigh,
On a spur of the crag did he graze his heel, and the ichor-flood
Like melting lead gushed forth: nor long thereafter he stood 1680

Towering up on the rock out-jutting that frowned o'er the brine.
But, even as high on the mountain side a giant pine,—
Which the woodmen have left, when adown from the forest at even they hie,
With the keen axe half hewn through,—as the winds of the night pass by,
Shivereth first in the blast, and swayeth; but, snapt ere long
At the stump, down falleth; so he on his feet all tireless-strong
For a little space yet stood, yet swayed he to and fro.
Thereafter all strengthless fell with a mighty crash their foe.
For that night there on the shore of Crete did the heroes lie;
But thereafter, so soon as the glow of the dawn overflushed the sky, 1690
A fane to Athênê Minôïs builded they thereby.
Then water they drew them, and hied them aboard, that with oars swift-sped
Before all else they might pass beyond Salmônê's Head.
But even as they ran over Crete's wide sea, all suddenly came
A horror of darkness on them, which the Pall of Blackness they name,
The Night of Destruction. No stars shone through it, no faint ray gleamed
Of the moon: black chaos from heaven descended, or haply upstreamed
Darkness that might be felt from the depths of the nethermost hell.
And whether through Hades they drifted, or heaved on the waters' swell,
Nowise they knew; but unto the sea in helpless despair 1700
They committed their home-return, to bear as it would. But in prayer
Cried Jason with mighty voice, and to Phœbus his hands did he raise,
Calling on him to save them, the while the tears ran down his face
In his trouble. To Pytho and Amyklae promised he once and again
Offerings unnumbered to bear, and gifts to Ortygia's fane.
And thou, O Lêto's son, wast swift to hear: from on high
Unto Melas' rocks thou descendedst, amidst of the sea which lie.
Twin peaks hath the isle: upon one thereof didst thou dart, and stand
Uplifting on high thy golden bow in a God's right hand.

Flashed round thee on every side the bow's bright splendour-sheen.
Then of the voyagers' eyes was a little island seen
Of the Sporades, overagainst Hippuris' tiny isle.
There cast they anchor, and waited: and soon Dawn's rosy smile
Flushed up through the sky. In a tree-shadowed dell to Apollo they made
A goodly hallowed place, and an altar mid twilight of shade.
And the Splendour-god, because of the splendour that far-seen flamed,
Phœbus they called; and Anaphê, 'Isle of Revealing,' they named
That rock, for that Phœbus revealed it to men bewildered sore.
And they sacrificed whatso men might provide on a desolate shore
For the sacrifice: but when, for that wine they had none, they shed
Water over the brands on the altar glowing red,
Medea's Phaeacian maidens beholding them could not refrain
The laughter their bosoms within any more; for that oxen slain
For the sacrifice in Alcinoüs' halls had they seen full oft.
But the heroes with mirthful hearts cast back their railing, and scoffed
With gibing words: and so, like the flame's light-flickering play,
Flashed taunts 'twixt these and contention of jesting. And unto this day,
From the old song-sport of the heroes, in that isle women fling
Even such light scoffs at the men when gifts of atonement they bring
To Apollo the Splendour-god, unto Anaphê's Warder-king.
But when thence they had loosed the hawsers, when summer-winds blew light,
Then did Euphêmus call to remembrance a dream of the night,
In his awe of the glorious son of Maia. For lo, him thought
That the god-given clod in his palm close unto his breast he had caught.
And therefrom like a suckling babe white streams of milk it drew,
Till the clod, for all that so little it were, to a woman grew
Like to a virgin. In love's embrace, by desire overborne,
Did he lie with the damsel: yet even as a maiden for ruth did he mourn

To have humbled her whom the very milk of his breast had fed.
But she with unangry words spake comfort to him, and she said : 174
'Offspring of Triton am I, and the nurse of thy children to be :
No maid, dear friend ; for that Triton and Libya gave birth unto me.
But me to the maidens the Daughters of Nereus do thou restore
To dwell in the sea nigh Anaphê's isle. I shall rise once more
To the light of the sun, for thy children's children a home prepared.'
Now his heart called this to remembrance ; and all that dream he declared
Unto Aison's son : then he mused in his soul on a prophecy
Of the Smiter from Far, and he uttered his thought, and thus spake he :
'O strange !—of a surety a weird of glorious renown is thine !
For the Gods shall make this clod, when thou castest it into the brine, 175
An island, wherein thy children's children hereafter shall live.
For this was the stranger's-gift which Triton did freely give
To thine hand on the Libyan shore. Of the Gods that abide for aye
None other was he who gave, when he met thee there in the way.'
He spake, and Euphêmus set not at nought that answering word ;
But his heart for the Aisonid's oracle-promise was gladness-stirred;
And he cast 'mid the surges the clod. Thence rose up an isle from the sea,
Kallistê, the sacred nurse of Euphêmus' children to be,
Which in Sintian Lemnos wont to dwell in the ancient days,
And from Lemnos were driven forth by men of Tyrrhenian race ; 176
And to Sparta as suppliants came they : from Sparta fared they on,
Until they were led of Thôras, Autesion's mighty son,
To Kallistê : then changed they its name, and Thôra the isle did they call
From their chief :—but after Euphêmus' days did this befall.
Thence parting, unhindered o'er long sea-rollers untold did they fare
Till they stayed on Aigina's beach ; and in innocent rivalry there
Hero with hero contended, the while the water they drew,
Who first should draw it, and who to the ship win first of the crew.

For their need, and withal the fresh strong breeze, bade hasten away.
Wherefore it cometh that yet do the youths of the Myrmidons lay 177
On their shoulders the jars full-brimmed, and burdened so do they speed
With light-running feet o'er the race-course striving for victory's meed.
Be gracious, O blest generation of chieftains!—may these lays ring
Year after year in the ears of men ever sweeter to sing!
For now at the last am I come to the glorious ending of all,
To the bourne of your travail: for struggle nor strife did thereafter befall
Unto you, as homeward-bound from Aigina did Argo flee,
Neither tempest of winds brake forth; but over a peaceful sea
By the land of Kekrops, by Aulis coasting, and under the lee
Of Eubœa, by cities Opuntian of Lokrian men did ye fleet, 178
Till with rapture of welcome on Pagasae's strand ye set your feet.

This rendering of the 'Argonautica,' *now first published, has been translated from the original Greek by* Arthur S. Way, M.A., *the gifted translator of* 'Homer's Iliad *and* Odyssey,' '*the* Tragedies *of* Euripides,' *and* '*the* Epodes *of* Horace.' *In the accompanying* '*Epilogue*' *the translator summarises the literary history of the poem, and indicates its place in Greek literature. The earlier English versions of the poem are the verse renderings by* Fawkes *and* Green (1780), *and* Preston (1803). *These translations are in the style of Pope; Preston's effort is the better; it is in three volumes, the second and third containing elaborate introductions and notes. The two poetical versions have been long out of print, and are now very rare. There is also an English prose rendering by* Coleridge (Bohn, 1889).

As in the case of Chapman's 'Iliads,' *the Publishers have thought it well to allow the type to run into the margin, so as to avoid the turning of the lines.*

The General Editor desires to thank Mr Way *for generously placing this new version of the old poem at his disposal for inclusion in the present series; he feels sure that many readers will appreciate this new-old treasure from* '*the realms of gold.*'

I. G.

Shakespeare's Day, 1901.

THE TRANSLATOR'S EPILOGUE

THE historian, if asked to name the country and the period in which literary men—not popular novelists, but men whose incentive to labour is the love of literature, science, research—were in the most enviable position, would go very far back from the present time, and point to Egypt as the country, and the three centuries before Christ as the period. 'The history of literature,' it has been said, 'is hardly anything but a martyrology, as though there were a conspiracy of ingratitude among men:' but the respect, honour and support accorded to literary genius under the Ptolemies form a striking contrast to its fate in other lands and epochs.

When, on the death of Alexander the Great, in 323 B.C., his vast empire was divided amongst his generals, one of them, Ptolemy Soter, became king of Egypt. Once established in his kingdom, he soon proved that he was very much more than a mere soldier. He was a man of brains, with a taste for literature, and a love for those who pursued it. His successors were worthy of him: the Ptolemies created an era in the history of literature; they made learning the fashion, and scholars, poets and men of science honourable.

Ptolemy I. (Soter) built at Alexandria a magnificent palace of learning, the Museum. This 'Temple of the Muses' was such in a very literal sense, and so was very much more than a museum in the restricted sense now commonly understood. It was a Residential Royal Academy of Literature, the Resident Fellows of which were literary men. The first great annexe to

the Museum was a Library, which the king spared no expense to make complete, and thus he attracted scholars from all Greek-speaking countries. His successor further enlarged the library, and added galleries of pictures and statues, and commenced a natural history museum. So it went on: Ptolemy after Ptolemy added to the completeness and magnificence of the now world-famous library, and amassed wealth of art-treasures and curiosities from all parts of the world. The foundation was richly endowed, so that the poets, scholars and scientists who dwelt there lived without a care, in sheltered comfort (Timon the Phliasian satirically called it 'the coop'), with every advantage for the prosecution of their labours, and (after the days of Ptolemy V. 204-181 B.C.) the prospect of a pension. There was a hall where they all dined, the king himself being sometimes of the company. Through generation after generation this institution was the hobby of the kings of Egypt, some of whom were themselves proud to be of the brotherhood of authors, and who vied with each other in fostering genius, talent and plodding industry, with a splendour, lavishness and zeal unapproached in any other age or country. It was Ptolemy II. (Philadelphus) under whose auspices was produced the great translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek, known as the Septuagint, from which the authors of the New Testament quote. When Egypt passed under the dominion of Rome, the Museum and its endowments did not suffer. Livy speaks of it as a noble monument of the wealth of the Egyptian kings; and Ammianus Marcellinus says that till the time of Aurelian (A.D. 270-275), the Museum 'continued to be the habitation of scholars.' The College, or Royal Society of Literature, so nobly housed, was under the government of a President, nominated first by the Ptolemies, afterwards by the Roman Emperors.

Of course, patronage cannot create genius, though it can provide conditions favourable to its development; and but few men of genius appeared during this long period of the establishment and endowment of literature. But the general level of culture was raised, and the amount of literary work done was immense.

A great deal of learned labour was expended upon the interpretation of Homer. 'It may indeed be said,' remarks Prof. Mahaffy, 'that all philology among the Greeks, all textual and grammatical criticism, arose from the desire to purify and to understand the text of Homer, and then of other old poets.' At the same time, however, while nothing was more meritorious than the *rôle* of the commentator on Homer, nothing was less so than any attempt to imitate him, or to revive, in any shape or form, epic poetry. It was settled as an axiom beyond controversy that the age of great sustained poems was past, that the age of literary gem-work, of perfect finish in minute details, 'of art for art's sake,' had come to stay. So poets were to restrict themselves to 'short swallow-flights of song,' fables, hymns to various deities and sacred places, elegies, epigrams, the one thing needful being that every line should be a model of polished brilliance, and that each poem should be a mine of learned allusion. Of this literary faith and practice the great champion and exponent was Callimachus.[1] He was, in the days of Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-247 B.C.), President of the Museum, and, in Prof. Murray's words, 'was perhaps the most influential personality in literature between Plato and Cicero.' Philologist, archaeologist, historian, dramatist, poet, critic—there was scarcely a department of literature in which he did not, in the view of his contemporaries, excel; and his industry was enormous. As an example of the scale on which he worked, it is sufficient to mention just one of his many productions—an Encyclopædia of Literature, biographical, bibliographical and critical, in one hundred and twenty books. The prestige of his official position, coupled with his exact interpretation of the demands and capacities of his age, made him the autocrat of letters. He carved with incisive criticism, and lashed with merciless ridicule, the *Thebaid*, an epic written by Antimachus of Colophon in imitation of Homer, a work which the Emperor Hadrian, long afterwards, pronounced superior to Homer's—from which fact we learn more perhaps of Hadrian than of the *Thebaid*. We can faintly

[1] To him is attributed the saying, 'A great book is a great evil.'

imagine, then, with what scornful indignation Callimachus heard that a pupil of his own, a young inmate of the Museum, who owed all his literary culture to its head, had revolted from the cardinal principles of the one literary faith, had actually written an epic!

Apollonius, son of Illeus (or Silleus), born, about 270 B.C., at Naucratis (or, according to other accounts, at Alexandria), was kindled by his studies in Homer to attempt a theme never yet worthily sung—the story of the Quest of the Golden Fleece by heroes who were the fathers of those whose exploits Homer sang. He can hardly have been ignorant of his master's views on the subject of modern epics; but he may well have felt some confidence that he could do that which would prove them wrong, and may have given Callimachus credit for magnanimity enough to confess himself mistaken when confronted with the actual achievement of that which he had pronounced impossible.

He completed his task, and gave a public reading of his epic, probably in the lecture-hall of the Museum. Its reception was a bitter disappointment for him. The audience took its cue from the all-powerful President; and before the storm of impatient interruptions, angry disapproval and contemptuous laughter the poor lad—he was not twenty—broke down, 'flushing crimson with mortification,' as the old Greek biographer graphically records. He recognised only too clearly who had taken the lead in crushing him, and tried to retaliate in satirical verse and stinging epigram. But it is given to few to be as effective with this weapon as Dryden or Byron, and Apollonius found that his enemy's artillery, discharged as it was from the vantage-ground of social influence and official authority, overmatched his own. Callimachus was not ashamed to put forth all his strength against his young and friendless opponent; and his bitter satire, *The Ibis*,[1] seems to have displayed no little ability and power of invective. It long survived the occasion for which it was written, and must have been, in its kind, of some merit, since,

[1] 'The Bird of the Nile' in satirical allusion to Apollonius' birthplace being beside that river.

personal and local though it was, its celebrity lasted till the Augustan age of Rome. Ovid took it as his model in his satirical poem of the same name.

The young poet found literary life in Alexandria made impossible for him, and (invited perhaps by sympathisers) he sailed thence to Rhodes. He there produced a revised version of his epic, and was comforted by the applause with which the Rhodians received it. Honoured by all, and presented with the freedom of the city, he gratefully took for his country the land where he was appreciated, and was proud to be known as 'Apollonius of Rhodes.' He lived there many years, a renowned poet, and a popular professor of rhetoric. Meanwhile at Alexandria his old enemy died: the old literary cliques were no more: the fame of the prophet who had been without honour in his own country had recrossed the sea: men longed to atone for the neglect which was a discredit to themselves; and Apollonius was given to understand that a warm welcome was prepared for him in the land of his birth. The temptation to triumph on the scene of his humiliation was irresistible. He returned to Egypt: he read his poem to enthusiastic audiences: the opportune death of Eratosthenes, who had succeeded Callimachus as President and Chief Librarian, created a vacancy for which Apollonius was acclaimed the only possible successor. So, installed as the head of the culture and learning of the Greek world, he lived days of peaceful industry and satisfied ambition, till, full of years and honours, he passed away, and, as though to symbolise forgiveness and oblivion of old feuds, was buried beside his old master, Callimachus.

Like all the Alexandrian scholars, he was busy with his pen to the last. His most important works, besides the 'Tale of the Argonauts,' were the 'Foundations,' poems embodying the stories or legends of the origin or foundation of famous cities, such as Rhodes, Cnidus, Alexandria. But of them all only nine and a half lines survive, and it is on the *Argonautica* that his fame must rest. The poem is, like the epics of Vergil, Tasso, Tennyson, the work of a student, and not, like those of Homer, the work of a man

who had been a part of the life he described. Apollonius connected the Argonauts with all the legends or myths belonging to the places they might be supposed to have visited, gathering materials for this part of his work from the rich libraries in which he wrote. Hence we find traces of his having more matter than he quite knew what to do with; and his digressions on the origins of cities, names, rites, and so forth, are occasionally such as the average reader will skip. Still, all together, they do not occupy proportionally as much space as the similarly little-read Catalogue of the Ships in the *Iliad*.

There can be no doubt that the *Argonautica* was for the ancients the one great epic between Homer and Vergil. Even contemporaries wrote commentaries on it. It was popular among the Romans. P. T. Varro earned fame by his translation of it, and Val. Flaccus wrote a Latin Argonautica, which was but a free translation of the Greek original. But his noblest eulogy will be found in the pages of Vergil, who drew no small part of his inspiration from him, transferring to his *Æneid* at least a score of episodes, similes, or picturesque touches.

On the other hand, Apollonius is very far from being an imitator of Homer. He is, indeed, considering the atmosphere in which his genius was trained, amazingly original; and it is not the least proof of his genius that he recognised that his strength lay in the very things which were either neglected, or lightly touched on, by Homer. The elaborate picturesqueness and unfailing *verve* with which he describes the coasting voyages, the weird desolation of the Libyan sands, the gauntlet-fight, the battle with the giants, the passage of the Clashing Crags, and that of the Wandering Rocks, the ploughing with the brazen bulls, and many other such incidents, are examples of work of which Homer gives but slight and occasional examples: while the great and crowning achievement of the poem, the story of Medea's passion, with its fierce fervour, its thrilling pathos, its lovely tenderness and virginal purity, its strangely modern introspectiveness and analysis of motives, is absolutely without parallel, not in Homer alone, but in any Greek poet whose works have come down to us. Even

Vergil, with all his human sympathy, with all the advantage of having such a model before him, cannot rise to the same height: the love of Dido is a pale reflex of that of Medea. It is curious, too, to note that, even in the minor matter of similes, Apollonius remains original. In only one (Bk. II. 541-548, where he somewhat expands Homer's thought) can he be charged with imitation.

The argument has been well summed up by Prof. R. Ellis:—'For Apollonius the problem was how to write an epic which should be modelled on the Homeric epics, yet be so completely different as to suggest, not resemblance, but contrast. We think no one who has read even a hundred lines of the poem can fail to be struck by this. It is in fact the reason why it is a success. The *Argonautica* could not have been written without the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, but it is in no sense an echo of either. Nay, we believe that a minute examination of Apollonius' language and rhythm would show that he placed himself under the most rigid laws of *intentional dissimilarity*. Not that this is more than one element of his success. His genius is quite as real an element; and no one will deny this who has studied the successive phases of Medea's passion in Book III. If, indeed, greatness could be tested by the extent of influence after death, the poem of Apollonius can rank only with the best works of Greek literature.'

THE END

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